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TURGOT:

HIS LIFE, TIMES, AND OPINIONS.

Two Lectures,

BY

W. B. HODGSON, LL.D.

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"Bonum virum facile crederes, magnum libenter. Quanquam medio in spatio ætatis ereptus, quantum ad gloriam, longissimum ævum peregit. Quippe vera bona, quæ in virtutibus sita sunt, impleverat."—TACITUS.

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TO THE MEMORY

OF

SAMUEL BAILEY,

WHO RESEMBLED TURGOT IN HIS CONVICTIONS,

IN HIS CHARACTER,

AND ALSO

IN HIS LACK OF APPRECIATION

BY AN AGE THAT WAS NOT WORTHY OF HIM,

These Lectures

ARE GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

HIS FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THESE lectures were delivered, during February, 1868, at Bradford, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, and more recently at Birmingham and in London. After they had been delivered at the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, for which they were written,—I would have published them, as I was requested to do, had I not intended to make them the groundwork of a more elaborate history of Turgot's times, and a much more complete analysis of his writings. Having, however, been lately informed by my friend Mr. John Morley that he has been for some time engaged in preparing a life of Turgot, which is to appear, by instalments, in the *Fortnightly Review*, I have abandoned this intention for the present, and it may be altogether, in the belief that the work is in very able hands, and that, when finished, it will leave little to be added or desired. I content myself, accordingly, with publishing now these

lectures, as delivered, lest I should hereafter seem to have only followed as the gleaner follows the strong reaper after an ample and well-gathered harvest. So great is the value, even in our more advanced time, of Turgot's history, and especially of his writings, that there is room, if not need, for more than one attempt to redeem them from unmerited and almost unaccountable neglect.

I regret that want of access to books where I write compels me to withhold many illustrative notes, and more precise references, which, otherwise, I should have been glad to append.

W. B. H.

JULY, 1870.
SEAMOOR HOUSE,
BOURNEMOUTH.

ERRATUM.

Page 60, last line, for "Publico" read "Publica."

TURGOT.

LECTURE I.

HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

SHAKSPERE makes Griffith say of Wolsey: "Men's evil manners live in brass: their virtues we write in water;" and he has put into the mouth of Antony these well-known words: "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones." What is thus said of the evil and the good in the deeds of an individual man, one is sometimes tempted to say of men whose deeds are pre-eminently evil, in comparison with others whose deeds are pre-eminently good. The latter are too rapidly and too commonly forgotten; the former are tenaciously remembered. The Catilines and the Borgias hold a disproportionate place in history; and for ten thousand who are well informed about Marat or Robespierre, there is perhaps one to whom the name of Turgot suggests a clear and definite idea. Yet it would be difficult to name many men of either ancient or modern times who deserve better than Turgot to be held in loving and reverent remembrance, not merely in his own country, but in every country that professes to admire great powers steadily applied to great purposes, and intellectual eminence ennobled by benevolence of heart and purity of life.

That he signally failed to accomplish much of the good at which he aimed so earnestly reflects dishonour on others rather than on him. If it is true that men are responsible for their conduct rather than for its results,* there is no reason why we should disparage or forget one who, so long as he could toil or suffer for the sake of others, "bated no jot of heart or hope." If he seems to have done but little, it is because his achievement, though absolutely great, was small relatively to the grandeur of his design. "Magnis tamen excidit ausis." "In great attempts 'tis glorious e'en to fail," and in a righteous cause the failure of one often heralds the general triumph; the defeat of to-day prepares the victory of many morrows.

Condorcet, who wrote a memoir of his friend Turgot, says of him with equal eloquence and justice: "Some men have exhibited great virtue with more display, have had more brilliant qualities, have shown in certain respects a greater genius; but perhaps never did any man present to general admiration an entire character more perfect and more impressive. It seemed that his wisdom and his strength of mind, seconding the gifts of nature, had left him no more ignorance, weakness and defect than are the inevitable heritage of a being with limited powers. It is in this extraordinary union of qualities that we must seek the cause of the little justice awarded to him and of the hatred which he excited. Envy seems to fasten rather on what approaches perfection, than on that which, while its greatness astonishes, offers, in a mixture of defects and vices, the consolation which envy needs. One may hope to dazzle the eyes of men, and to obtain the title of a man

* "Let a man do his work; the fruit of it is the care of another than he."—*Carlyle.*

of genius by dexterously flattering or even by resisting popular prejudices; one may hope to disguise conduct with the mask of exaggerated virtues; but the constant practice of simple and unostentatious excellence, reason ever on its guard, ever indefatigable in the path of truth,—this is what hypocrisy and quackery will ever despair of imitating; this is what they are bound to stifle and destroy."

Whether this eulogium be too highly coloured, I trust to enable you, in some measure, for yourselves to judge.

Anne Robert Jacques Turgot was the youngest of the three sons of Michael Etienne Turgot, Provost of the Merchants of Paris under Louis XV., and was born at Paris in the year 1727, about four years after the birth of Adam Smith, with whose name his will ever be honourably associated in the history of Economic Science. The Turgot family, which appeared in Normandy during the Crusades, is in France believed to have been of Scottish origin, though it is also said to have been founded by Togut, a Danish prince; and one of Turgot's ancestors is reported to have been first minister of the Scottish King Malcolm III.

His father, as Provost of the Merchants of Paris in 1729 and ten following years, earned a fair repute by his public spirit, courage, uprightness, and benevolence. In times of scarcity, then so much more frequent and serious than now, he ministered largely to the necessities of the poor. He constructed the great sewer of the city on the right bank of the Seine; he enlarged the Quai de l'Horloge, prolonged it and united it by a bridge with the opposite bank; and he caused to be erected the beautiful fountain which still exists in the Rue de Grenelle de St. Germain. He is further recorded to have quelled by his

courage in rushing between the combatants, a fierce party fight in which the Swiss guards had one day engaged with some French troops.

The youngest of three sons, Turgot, as was then the custom, was destined to the Church. From the College of Louis le Grand and the College de Plessis he advanced to the seminary of St. Sulpice, and thence, as bachelor of theology, to the Sorbonne, in order to be licensed. Of his two brothers, one was designed for the magistracy, the other for the army. As in the case of many other eminent men, his contemporaries loved afterwards to recall the incidents of his youth, and to trace in them indications of the character then in embryo, and of the destiny yet unrevealed. Thus, one of his fellow-pupils at the Sorbonne, the Abbé Morellet,* has recorded of him some interesting particulars. He says in his Memoirs: "This man who has risen so high above the common level, who has left a name dear to all the friends of humanity, and a memory which all who knew him fondly cherish, even then showed in part the sagacity, penetration, and depth of thought which one day he was fully to display. To the simplicity of a child he joined a sort of dignity, which made him respected by all his comrades, even those much older than himself. He had an almost girlish modesty and reserve. The slightest *double entendre* made him blush to the eyes, and threw him into great embarrassment. But this reserve was quite compatible with the frank, unrestrained gaiety of a child. His memory was prodigious,

* Morellet has been styled "the link between two generations and two literatures;" he devoted himself greatly to economic studies; he in early life projected a Dictionary of Commerce, and he published a translation of Smith's "Wealth of Nations."

and I have seen him repeat as many as a hundred and twenty verses, after he had heard them only twice or even once. He knew by heart the most of Voltaire's fugitive pieces, and many passages from his poems and tragedies. The dominant features of his mind were penetration, which enabled him to detect just relations among ideas seemingly unconnected, and a range of view which took them all in systematic order."

His extreme bashfulness was probably due in no small measure to injudicious treatment by his mother, who, in presence of others, often ridiculed his shy and awkward reserve. From the same Morellet we learn that he would at times hide himself from visitors by retiring behind a screen or below a sofa. The feeling thus, unfortunately, confirmed remained with him through life, and gave in later years, and in his official position, an appearance of pride and coldness to manners which were in truth the result of diffidence verging upon timidity.

Selfishness was as far from his nature as was self-assertion. At the College of Louis le Grand his parents, observing that his pocket-money was very rapidly expended, set the Principal upon the watch, and so discovered that he distributed it among the poorer of his companions, to enable them to buy books.

He was more fortunate in some of his teachers, as well as of his comrades, than he was in his mother. At the College of Plessis, his master in philosophy was the Abbé Sigorgne, who first in the University displaced the Vortices of Des Cartes by the Physics of Newton. Of others, now unknown to fame, I need not speak, though their influence was great in developing those mental qualities that fostered between the teachers and the taught a lasting friendship.

in which respect mingled, not solely on the pupil's side.

At the Sorbonne Turgot spent two years, devoted by no means mainly to theology. His studies were very various, and included ancient and modern languages, literature, law, geography, and mathematics.

Locke, Voltaire, Montesquieu—treatises on economics, politics, and finance—all were eagerly read and discussed by him and his companions. The events of the time did not escape attention, and led to animated debates. The question of religious toleration excited in them peculiar interest. With youthful ardour and generosity many, if not most, espoused what we now call the liberal side. "We maintained," says Morellet, "that indifference or hostility to religion could not be justly predicated of a government which, putting aside the verity or the falsity of differing creeds, allows their adherents to teach in freedom their several dogmas, and to practise their worship in all things not contrary to public morals and social peace; that the sovereign and all the magistrates may be perfectly convinced that the Christian and Catholic is the only true religion, that out of the church there is no salvation—and yet tolerate in civil life all possible sects, leave them to worship in public, admit them even to magistracies and other offices, in a word make no difference between a Jansenist, a Lutheran, a Calvinist, even a Jew and a Catholic, in all the emoluments and duties, charges and powers purely civil of society. We did not conceal this reasonable doctrine, for we defended it even in our college theses, not without some resistance and censure on the part of the old doctors, but without inconvenience to ourselves."

Of Turgot's very early writings, during and even before his residence at the Sorbonne, several have been preserved.

The earliest, written at the seminary of St. Sulpice, is of date 1748. It is a reply to Buffon's theory of cosmic and geologic changes. It was anonymously addressed to Buffon himself, and was based on reasons drawn from the teachings of Newton. The next, dated 1749, was a letter, of which only a fragment now remains, addressed to Abbé Cicé, on paper-money. Of this, as we shall have to speak of it hereafter, it may suffice now to say that seldom indeed has so thoughtful and sound a treatise been written by one so young. He was then only twenty-two years old.

In 1750 it was, as appears, that Turgot wrote critical remarks on a paper by Maupertuis.* This was entitled "Reflexions on the Origin of Language and the Signification of Words." In the same year he wrote "Two Letters on the System of Berkeley." Our present concern, it is true, is mainly with his life; but of that his writings are, at this stage, the chief landmarks.

In 1748, the Academy of Soissons offered a prize for the best essay on the question, "What, in all times, are the possible causes of the decline of arts and sciences?" Turgot resolved to compete, but, having learned that his instructor at the College of Plessis—the Abbé Bon—had the same intention, he gave up the thought, and made over to his friend the sketch of his plan, and the portions which he had already written.

Having been elected, in 1749, Prior of the Sorbonne, he was required, as a consequence of this nominal dignity,

* Maupertuis was the friend and correspondent of Frederick the Great. It is to him that the Prussian monarch inscribed the poem which begins:

"O, Maupertuis, cher Maupertuis,
Que nôtre vie est peu de chose!"

which was conferred by the doctors on the bachelor of the most distinguished family, to deliver two Latin discourses, one at the opening, the other at the close, of the theological theses. He chose as the subject of the first, "The benefits which the establishment of Christianity has conferred upon mankind;" and for the second, "The successive development of the human intelligence." Of the latter it may be remarked, in passing, that it contains one memorable passage: "Colonies are like fruits, which cling to the parent tree only till they are ripe; when the Greek colonies became sufficient for themselves, they did what Carthage did, and what one day America will do." This was written twenty-six years before the declaration of American independence.

Of the two addresses just mentioned Dupont de Nemours* has preserved a French translation; but many of these early writings have been more or less completely lost, and among them a treatise on the existence of God, and several theological dissertations.

He undertook a Latin Dictionary, chiefly etymological, tracing the origin of words and their combinations. In a list written by his own hand appear many subjects on which he designed and was preparing himself to write,—metaphysics, languages, sciences, history, morals, politics, legislation, administration. He made translations from Ossian, Gessner, and Klopstock. He had sketched out two poems, one on the seasons, one on natural law; and of all these contemplated works, it appears that he began, if not completed, fifteen.

* Dupont has been said to be to Turgot in some measure what Eckermann was to Göthe. Dupont was as little like Boswell as Turgot was like Johnson.

But now came the inevitable hour—that solemn crisis in the life of every man,—the choice of a life-vocation. *Vocation* means calling; but by whom, or by what shall a youth be called to make this solemn choice? By the ambition of parents, their prejudiced affection, their perhaps erroneous judgment, the caprice of the youth himself, or the promptings within him of a strong and abiding impulse, which past reflection, present tendency, and future experience shall concur to justify? Turgot shrank with an invincible repugnance from the clerical profession. In our country, and in our time, if a young man who has been led from his early years to look forward to the church, recoils from the final plunge, we suspect some doubt of one or other of the Thirty-nine Articles—some misgiving as to his ability to bear the restraints or to discharge the duties, some stirrings of secular ambition; but in France, at the time we speak of, other causes also were at work. The clerical office was tainted with hypocrisy, licentiousness, unscrupulous and unblushing worldliness. Atheism itself was no bar to the assumption or retention of the priestly character; open vice was not reckoned incompatible with its obligations, and the highest positions in the state were not only open, but open by preference to the dignitaries of the church. Such men as Talleyrand and Loménie de Brienne were typical.*

* When the latter was proposed for the Archbishopric of Paris, the King remarked: "The Archbishop of Paris ought, at least, to believe in a God." *Souvenirs et Portraits*, par M. de Lavis. Paris. 1813. p. 103. "*Le Cardinal de Loménie.*" "At a table where Talleyrand was present, the Rev. Sidney Smith expressed a wish that, when his brother '*Bobus*' was Lord Chancellor, he would make him a bishop. 'I will,' said Bobus, 'after I have made you commit every baseness of which a priest is capable.' The ex-bishop only observed, '*mais quelle latitude enorme.*'"—*Athenæum*, 9*th July*, 1870, *p.* 40.

No wonder that to Turgot the ecclesiastical life was utterly distasteful. It must have been so even had he held all the tenets of the church. It was well that his father refused to thwart his wishes. But his companions addressed to him remonstrances, such as have often since been addressed to youth struggling with doubts; such as have often since been effectual in stifling the voice of conscience. The Abbé Cicé, speaking in the name of all, addressed him in words reported by Dupont de Nemours: "We think unanimously that you are about to act in a way quite at variance with your interest, and with your remarkable good sense. You are the youngest son of a Norman house, and you are, consequently, poor. The magistracy requires a considerable fortune, without which there is loss of consideration with no hope of advancement. Your father has a high reputation; your relatives have influence. If you do not quit the career that they have assigned you, you are certain to obtain excellent livings, and to be early in life a bishop. Your family will easily secure for you a bishopric of Languedoc, Provence, or Brittany. Then your fine dreams of administrative power may be realised, and, without ceasing to be a Churchman, you may be a statesman at your leisure; you may do good in every way to those committed to your charge. Consider this prospect; see that it depends wholly on yourself to become very useful to your country, to acquire high renown, perhaps to gain an entrance into the ministry itself. If, however, you shut the door against yourself, if you break the plank under your feet, you will be doomed to try cases at law; you will fritter away and waste in petty private business a genius fit to deal with public affairs of the highest moment." A skilful appeal,

frankly and decisively answered! "My dear friends," said Turgot, "I am deeply touched by your zeal on my behalf, and I feel more than I can express. In what you say there is much truth. Take to yourselves the counsel you offer to me, since you can follow it. Though I love you, I cannot fully understand your view of this question. As for me, I cannot possibly resign myself to wear through life a mask over my face."

Adam Smith, likewise, was intended for the church; but, no more than Turgot, could he bind himself to the life-long profession of what he did not thoroughly believe, or even what he might thereafter see reason to reject.*

Turgot was now free to pursue more closely his legal studies. In 1753 he obtained the title of Master of Requests, having in the previous year held successively two offices preliminary to this. As Master of Requests, it is recorded by Condorcet that, having been instructed to inquire into a serious charge against one employed in the department of finance, he delayed to institute proceedings, being impressed with the notion that the accused was guilty. When, however, his innocence was established by examination, Turgot restored to him from his own purse

* It is interesting, however, to observe that to the ranks of economists no profession, perhaps, has made larger contributions than the clerical. The names of Malthus, Whately, Chalmers, Wayland, Fox, Mastrolini, Maury, Townsend, Tucker, St. Pierre, Rogers Ruding, and Thorold Rogers may be cited in illustration. Cobbett, indeed, with his usual brutality of invective, said to Malthus: "I call you by the only name which expresses the full infamy of your character, when I say—*Parson.*" But now-a-days such a sentiment finds no sympathy except perhaps in some college of pretentious but spurious liberalism, which interprets equality of religions to mean the negation of religion, which reckons two persecutions as equal to one tolerance, and, casting out Satan by Beelzebub, tries to avenge the religious exclusiveness of the past by excluding for ever from even secular teaching all ministers of religion of every name.

the amount of salary of which during the inquiry he had been deprived, declaring at the same time that this was an act not of generosity but of justice.*

His spare time he still devoted to science, literature, and philosophy. Mathematics, physics, chemistry, metaphysics, and history, as well as philosophy, he continued to study; and to his knowledge of Greek and of Latin he added that of Hebrew. Among the writings that mark this period of his life, I can only mention his plan of a Political Geography, two Discourses on Universal History (1750 and 1751), two Letters on Toleration (1753, 1754), the "Conciliator, or Letters of an Ecclesiastic to a Magistrate on Civil Toleration," his translation of Josiah Tucker's "Important Questions about Commerce" (1753), his articles in the *Encyclopédie* (1756) on Existence, Etymology, Expansibility, Fairs and Markets, and Foundations, and lastly, his eulogium on Gournay, author of the famous, but often mis-understood, saying, "Laissez faire, laissez passer" (1759). The range of subjects here mentioned indicates at least the versatility and comprehensiveness of Turgot's mind. To these he proposed to add other articles on Metaphor, the Origin of Language, Signs, Identity, Immaterialism, Memory, Sensation, Substance, Mode, Individual, Humanity, Hospitals, Mendicity. The suspension, however, and subsequent prohibition, of the *Encyclopédie* prevented the completion of these articles.

*A parallel to this conduct is recorded of Sir William Nairne, afterwards Lord Dunsinnan: "When Sheriff-depute of Perthshire, he found, upon reflection, that he had decided a poor man's case erroneously, and as the only remedy, supplied the litigant privately with money to carry the suit to the supreme court, where his judgment was reversed."—*Note by Sir Walter Scott to Boswell's Life of Johnson. Quoted in "Quarterly Review," vol. 46; 1832. p. 39.*

The name of Gournay leads us to note an epoch in the mental career of Turgot; and the name of Gournay is for ever associated with one still greater, that of his master, Quesnay, to whom, if to any one man, rightfully belongs, in spite of errors, the title of founder of Economic Science. Both Quesnay and his friend, Vincent de Gournay, with whom Turgot became acquainted about 1754, did much to influence his subsequent life, as well as to give definiteness and completeness to his economic creed. Gournay was the son of a merchant, and for a time was himself a merchant. Like Quesnay, if by a different process, he had come to the conclusion that freedom of industry and of trade, and the abolition of taxes on consumption, were the great means of developing a nation's wealth. From 1755 to 1759, when Gournay died, Turgot was his almost constant companion, and accompanied him for several successive years in his official visits as "Intendant of Commerce," to Guienne, Anjou, Maine, and Brittany.

In 1760, Turgot made a long journey in Switzerland and the Alps, collecting notes on the geology, industry, and commerce of the places he visited. At Lausanne he was first attacked by the disease which, years after, caused his still untimely death. At Geneva he visited Voltaire, on the introduction of D' Alembert. Voltaire was much pleased with his visitor. He wrote to D' Argental: "We have here just now M. Turgot, who is worth more than the whole bar. He has no need of my instructions; he is fitter to instruct me. He is a most loveable philosopher." And again to D' Alembert: "I am still quite full of M. Turgot. I did not know that he had written the article on Existence. He is still better than his article. I have scarcely ever seen a man more loveable or better informed;

and, what is rare among metaphysicians, his taste is most delicate and sound."

In 1761, shortly after his return to Paris, he was named Intendant of the "generality" of Limoges. There he was to spend the next thirteen years of his life in efforts, much less successful than laborious, to improve a state of things that had gone far beyond the possibility of peaceful improvement or of gradual change. Voltaire, on hearing of his appointment, wrote to him thus: "One of your colleagues has told me that an intendant is fit only to do mischief. I hope you will prove that he can do much good." Assuredly, will was not wanting, or wisdom; but, as it has been well said, "in the heart of a poor province he consumed the most valuable portion of a man's life in struggling with a prodigious expenditure of intelligence and energy against the prejudices of the very people whom he wished to aid, against the avidity of a grasping government, in the hope of slightly bettering the condition of poor peasants. We ought not, however, to regret this long sacrifice, seemingly barren as it was. His administration prepared the way for his ministry, and his ministry smoothed the way for the Revolution."

It is difficult to comprehend or to believe the terrible complication of oppression and injustice that then weighed upon France, especially in the rural and in the poorest districts, of which Limoges was one. Taxation was at once most burdensome in amount, most arbitrary and iniquitous in its apportionment, and as if ingeniously contrived to dry up the very sources from which it was expected to flow. Bois-Guillebert, in a dialogue* published

* This dialogue is quoted by Dr. J. H. Bridges in his very admirable lectures on "France under Richelieu and Colbert," pp. 92—94.

in 1697, gives a humorous but quite truthful sketch of the working of a system which remained almost unchanged up to the time of the Revolution. A Norman farmer is supposed to bargain with the King for a lease of some Crown lands, and the King thus explains the conditions to which the lessee would be subject:

"When you wish to purchase a cask of wine, you will have to pay seventeen dues at seven or eight different offices, which are only open at certain hours of certain days. If you fail in any one of these, whatever delay it may cost you, the wine and the carriage which conveys it will all be confiscated for the benefit of the officials. And I may observe that their word in the matter will always be taken against yours. Again, when you want to sell your goods at a reasonable price, I shall put such a heavy tax upon them that your customers will prefer buying elsewhere. I shall derive little good from all this, and you will lose the whole value of your labour; but such is our system. Often you will find it impossible to sell your liquors, though a day's journey off they may be selling at an extravagant price. But if you should be induced by this price to take your goods there, you will probably find it of little use, for there are various tolls on the way which I have farmed out, the formalities of which are extremely difficult to observe. The loss to you in this is ten times as great as the gain to me, but I am told that it is for my advantage to have things managed thus. Besides this, you will have to pay me yearly a sum bearing no fixed relation to your property, varying indeed from one parish to another, so that it will be most desirable for you to curry favour with the officials who assess this tax.

I should advise you not to be too regular about the payment of your taxes. The assessors find it thoroughly answers to engage in a good deal of litigation. And, indeed, if I found that they gathered in their taxes too easily, I should certainly not farm the taxes to them on such favourable terms. It will be desirable for you to live as meanly and poorly as possible, or you will assuredly be assessed at a higher rate. Hide up your savings in any odd corner; beware of investing them. Avoid for the same reason putting any cattle on your land to manure it. . . . I may mention, also, that the business of collection, which is extremely onerous, will fall on you every three or four years; the tax-farmer will hold you responsible for the amount, and will distrain and imprison you if it is not forthcoming. To which the farmer replies: 'Sire, I presume that all you wish is to receive a certain amount of money. Now, the plan you have been describing seems expressly invented for the purpose of ruining yourself and me at the same time. Your wealth and mine can only come from the sale of the produce of our land, and this plan makes it impossible or difficult to grow any produce. Now, I offer to pay your Majesty exactly double the sum you ask for, provided only that you will allow me to consume what I please, to grow what I please, and to sell where and how I please. The bargain will be an excellent one for me, for I shall make ten times my present profits.'" It needs scarcely be added that the poor farmer's offer is not accepted.

But taxes levied by the Government were not all, or the worst. There were dues to the nobles, and dues to the clergy. M. Moreau de Jonnès, in his most valuable work,

published a few years ago, on the Economic and Social State of France, gives a long list of facts; which, taken together, go far to enable us to picture to ourselves the awful misery to which the people were reduced, as well as to understand its causes. He says:—"Up to the Revolution, in spite of the crafty tyranny of Louis XI, the sanguinary dominion of Richelieu, and the haughty sway of Louis XIV., the masters of the country were feudality and the priesthood, one represented by the high *noblesse*, the other by the high clergy. The land, which was the only wealth of the time, belonged to them almost entirely. The labour which fertilised it belonged to them in like manner under various titles. There was nothing in civil life of which they had not the power to demand a portion, if not the whole. Every thing, every action, every need, every faculty was subjected to a tax, which the peasant, the plebeian, the townsman, was bound respectfully to pay; accompanying the payment with a display of servitude and humiliation. *No one, so far as we know, has been able to tell the full number of these dues, and the amount they yielded.* We, who have only skimmed this vast subject, have enumerated more than three hundred sorts of feudal dues. In a single cartulary, that of the Abbaye of St. Pierre, at Chartres, M. Guerard reckons seventy of these to which the vassals were subjected."—(C. 7; p. 388.)

M. Moreau de Jonnès then proceeds to give a catalogue, occupying several pages, first of the feudal, and then of the clerical *droits*, or dues, appending here and there details equally curious and instructive, to which, however, I can here do no more than refer. Some of these dues, odious as in themselves they were, were only modified and

milder forms of exactions too disgusting or too terrible to be recounted or almost believed.*

While the wealth of the *noblesse* and of the clergy was enormous, the burden of taxation fell almost exclusively on the toiling poor. "In his official report, in 1790, to the Constituent Assembly, M. Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, estimated the tithes of the clergy at eighty millions of francs; they were worth double that sum. In like manner their other revenues were understated. The number of ecclesiastics he stated at seventy-five thousand; there were, at least, three times that number. Thus, in defiance of the truth, which, as agent-general of the clergy, he must have known, he reduced the wealth by half, and the number of its possessors by two-thirds." *(Id. Ibid.)*

Instead, however, of dwelling further on the sad array of facts and figures drawn up by M. Moreau, in illustration of feudal and clerical rapacity, let me adduce one striking example of the social and fiscal disorders of the time. In "Le Livre Rouge," or History of the Scaffold in France (1863), there is a memoir of a certain Mandrin, who, in 1755, was broken on the wheel for smuggling. Of him Voltaire says: "Mandrin, the most magnanimous of contrabandists, might have been sent into the heart of Canada to fight the savages, while his country still possessed Canada;" and the author of "The Dictionary of Conversation" says: "Mandrin, who needed an army of

* Thus the right of *main-morte*, or dead hand, abolished at the Revolution, had its origin, according to the elder Mirabeau, in this manner: "The *seigneur* was entitled, after the death of the head of a family of serfs, to take possession of the most valuable article belonging to the house, and, if the deceased left nothing, his right hand was cut off, and with it homage was paid to the *seigneur*, as with an instrument that had been devoted to him, but from which nothing more could be expected."—*Memoires de Rivarol, par M. Berville.* 1824. *p.* 141.

six thousand men to defeat him, was certainly not an ordinary man. The most of the Spanish chiefs, who, in the war of independence, maintained their country's cause, had no other antecedents than he." This Mandrin, a horse jockey, untrained to arms, for two years resisted the whole armed force of forty of the present departments of France, including six regiments of infantry, and two of dragoons, commanded by a lieutenant-general, and, after a valiant fight, yielded only because all his men were on horseback; and he had not a single piece of artillery. He took refuge in Savoy, in the Sardinian territory. By a violation of international right, he was seized, and, while the Duke de Noailles was sent to Turin, to make excuses, in order to evade a war, threatened by the King of Sardinia, to whom smuggling was advantageous, Mandrin was, in ten days, tried, sentenced, and executed. What is the explanation of a career so strange? Not having been paid for horses furnished to the Government, he threw himself heartily into the contraband trade both between Switzerland or Savoy and France, and between the different provinces of France itself. He gathered about him many outlaws like himself; but, smuggling apart, he does not seem to have been at all a criminal. Like our own Robin Hood, he excited the warmest sympathy and admiration of the people at large; he robbed no one, and was cruel to none but the agents of the customs. To this day, his name is highly esteemed among the peasants of Dauphiny. A feigned analysis of his last will and testament was dedicated, in 1789, to the Assembly of the States General; and, as a vindicator of the right of free trade against fiscal exactions, he was not long ago styled "a Cobden on horseback." It is to be remembered

that there were, at this time, custom-houses, not only at the frontiers of the kingdom, but between province and province, town and town. A bridge, a brook, a post divided a place where salt was sold at two farthings a pound, from another in which it was sold for seven or even ten pence. These odious imposts, besides, could not be evaded by disuse of the articles on which they were levied. The law provided against this. Every citizen was marked down for a certain quantity, and for that he was forced to pay, whether he consumed it or not. That is just as if the State, not content with selling us tobacco at twenty shillings a pound, forced even those who cannot bear the smell of it to pay for two or three pounds a year. The existence of one such case as that of Mandrin reveals, as by a single flash, a whole world of darkness.

On assuming office, Turgot's first, as it was his constant, endeavour was to lighten the load of taxation, and to distribute it more justly. It was inevitable that there should be large arrears of taxes that could not be paid. Limoges was a million of francs (£40,000) behindhand, and three years were needed to raise even the annual contribution. The *taille* was raised not only with exemption of the lands of nobles, but, in at least a third of the districts, on the utterly untrustworthy declarations of those taxed, and, in the other two-thirds, on a survey made twenty-two years before, hurriedly, by one surveyor, often a stranger to the country, without discussion, without appeal, without note of changes by death, or sale, or succession during all the years that followed. For five years Turgot devoted himself to the task of obtaining an accurate survey and census, or *cadastre*. In 1762, he wrote to the Controller-General :—"The work which I

have done is already vast, and almost beyond my strength. I look forward with fear, but not wholly without hope, to what of my task remains." When offered the more lucrative post of Intendant of Lyons, he declined the promotion, in the hope that he might succeed in establishing the *taille* on a more equitable basis within the district of Limoges. Unaided by the Government, however, he could not complete the work; and the abuses continued, abated only in individual cases by the Intendant's decisions, which, of necessity, were often given without due knowledge of the facts.

In the *corveé*, or compulsory work upon the roads, from which, as usual, both clergy and nobility were exempt, a beneficial change was made by the substitution of a payment in money for the actual labour, and by the extension of the tax to all the peasants of the district, instead of merely those in the parishes bordering on the roads.

Still more oppressive was the *corveé* for the transport of military equipages, the peasants who lived near the high roads being forced to furnish lodging to the soldiers, and cattle to draw the wagons. Turgot himself describes some of the scenes that resulted from this exaction. "Often," he says, "on the road, soldiers mount upon the vehicles already overloaded; impatient of the slowness of the oxen, they goad them with their swords, and, if the peasant remonstrates, he invariably gets the worst, and returns soundly beaten." This, too, was replaced by a money-tax, spread over a wider area; and the whole province paid an official to take entire charge of the military transport.

The raising of the militia was another grievance. Some evaded the decision of the ballot, and fled into the woods;

while others, in arms, pursued them to compel them to share the common hardship. Fighting ensued. Substitutes had been forbidden by law, but in Limoges, as elsewhere, breaches of the law had been connived at, and Turgot established peace by venturing to authorise the practice of substitution.

Turgot encouraged, and personally aided, the construction of roads; he built barracks in towns for the soldiers who had been before quartered on the peasants. He promoted agriculture, and became the president of a society, to the prizes given by which he contributed; he encouraged the growth of the potato, and established a veterinary college.

In 1770 and 1771, a terrible famine laid waste the province. "One cannot think without a shudder," he writes, "of the fate which threatens the inhabitants. On what can the people live who have sold their furniture, their cattle, their clothes, for food? What help can they get from proprietors who have reaped no crop, who have no funds to buy seed, and who last year spent more than their income in support of their children and dependants? How are the proprietors themselves to live? Large tracts of country have not been sown from want of means. How can the inhabitants pay taxes? How can they avoid death by hunger?"

At such a crisis it was not enough to insist on freedom of trade, which, as we have seen, did not exist even between province and province. Energetic means of various kinds were adopted. The parliament of Bordeaux empowered him to levy a contribution on all the richer persons without distinction, in aid of the sufferers; temporary employment was provided, and, by these and other devices, the

worst of the affliction was avoided; but a debt of 20,000 livres had been contracted. After these two years of scarcity, the arrears of taxation rose in 1773 to four millions of francs, as was natural when the government claimed, in one or other form, more than half, and nearly two-thirds, of the net revenue. Well might Turgot tell the Controller-General, the Abbé Terray (to whom afterwards he succeeded in his office): "It is physically impossible to extort the current taxes and the enormous arrears without—aye, even with—ruin to the taxed." No redress, however, no alleviation, was to be obtained; the claim for money that could not be raised could not be abandoned.

If Turgot left his province worse than he found it, the reason was the same as that which made the Revolution an inevitable necessity. The grand evil in the small scale, as on the large, was, it has been truly said, "the existence of classes iniquitously privileged, who not only threw on the plebeians, that is, the people, all the burdens of the state, but devoured the national substance by their exactions; and, further, the numerous trammels which crippled trade and industry, loaded production with useless and injurious costs, isolated the consumer, paralysed intelligence by robbing it of its rightful reward, and doomed labour to sterility. To restore to France its natural fertility, it was indispensable to clear the soil of that parasitic vegetation." *

* "The Revolution broke out because life was dear, the press was gagged, society was corrupt, the nobles were ignoble, bankruptcy impended, and the government was insufficient."—*Athenæum*, 23*rd May*, 1868. *p.* 724.

Much simpler are the explanations sometimes offered: "There was such an event as the French Revolution, and that Revolution was *caused* by the purchase of a diamond necklace by Marie Antoinette!"—*James Harvey*, "*Usury the Scourge of Nations.*" 1870. *p.* 16. (See Appendix.)

Turgot himself wrote to Condorcet: "I believe the satisfaction resulting from study superior to all other satisfactions. I am firmly convinced that one can thus be a thousand times more useful to mankind than in any subordinate office, in which one torments one's self, and often without success, in order to do some little good, while one is the compulsory instrument of doing great evil."

His ardent zeal in his official duties did not prevent his writing, from time to time, various papers, of which we shall speak hereafter, as they are among the most valuable of his productions. During his term of office he occasionally visited Paris, and it is very memorable that on one of those occasions he took part in the judgment that reversed the sentence of Calas, the well-known Protestant martyr of Toulouse.* It is recorded, and it is very characteristic, that on this subject he spoke with a vehemence in him unusual. He maintained a constant correspondence with the economists and philosophers at Paris, especially with Dupont, Morellet, Condorcet, and D'Alembert. As a relief from his graver studies, he wrote satires, some of which were attributed to Voltaire; and translated into French hexameters and pentameters the Fourth Book of Virgil's Æneid.†

* It is impossible to make even this passing reference to Calas without a tribute of respect and admiration to Voltaire, who, during at least three years, laboured with the most indefatigable pertinacity, until he succeeded in cancelling, so far as was possible, an infamous injustice. Those who have not time to read the elaborate monograph by M. Athanase Coquerel ("*Calas et la Famille.*" 2nd edition. Paris) will find the story in Murray's Handbook to the South of France, and, still better, in the *Theological Review* for July, 1870. The Rev. C. Kegan Paul has there admirably condensed the chief facts in this still controverted case. Coquerel makes no mention of Turgot.

† On this startling innovation he was very anxious to learn Voltaire's opinion, and under the pseudonym of the Abbé l'Aage des Bournais, he

He was now to enter on a wider field of action, and it is the less to be regretted that want of time compels us to hurry over his subsequent career, because, while not more illustrative of his character than the earlier and less known portion of his life, it forms part of the general history of France, and is more or less familiar to many, if not most. In 1774, the year of the death of Louis XV. and of Quesnay, he was named Secretary of State in the Department of the Marine. It is very significant of the time that he owed his appointment not to his rare merit, or to his past services, or even to his family connections, but to a sort of backstairs influence. The Abbé Cicé, one of his fellow-pupils at the Sorbonne, who, like many others, had retained all the early admiration with which he had regarded Turgot, made his name known to Madame Maurepas, the wife of the prime minister, and Maurepas gave him the office, little reckoning, as it seems, with how upright and energetic a spirit he had to deal. Turgot held this office for only five weeks, but in that short time he caused the workmen at the port of Brest to be paid eighteen months' arrears of wages, and, as is recorded by Dupont, his secretary and friend, he formed many plans for the extension of commerce and the improvement of the colonies. His views on colonial questions nearly resembled those now most prevalent. He wished colonies to be free and to be justly treated, no taxation being imposed beyond the cost of their administration. He was resolutely opposed to slavery, though not an advocate for its instantaneous abolition. He would have destroyed

extracted from him a very eulogistic comment, without, however, in spite of repeated inquiry, obtaining any judgment regarding the gravest question of all, the peculiar versification.

slavery by bringing free labour face to face with it. He intended to make Bourbon and the Isle of France absolutely free ports; but before this, and other good purposes could be effected, he was raised to the Controller-Generalship, in the autumn of 1774.

The mental contrasts between Turgot and his predecessor, the Abbé Terray, were typified by the contrasts between their respective physiognomies. M. de Monthyo says that the stubbornness and insensibility of Terray were indicated by his gloomy and repulsive countenance, while the face of Turgot was handsome and majestic, with something of that dignity so remarkable in the antique busts.

A few hours after his appointment, he wrote a long and admirable letter to the young king, Louis XVI., then in his twentieth year, recounting the projected reforms which he had sketched out fifteen years before, when master of requests. No bankruptcy, no increase of taxation, no borrowing,—the need for any of these measures being prevented by increased economy. One might fancy Cobden uttering these words: "Every official in his own department will maintain that every expenditure is indispensable. The reasons given may be good, but, as what is impossible cannot be done, all those reasons must give way to the absolute necessity of economy." He goes on to show that the King's own generosity was a source of danger. He charges him to arm himself with his very goodness against his goodness; to remember whence comes the money he might distribute to his courtiers, and to compare the misery of those from whom rigorous exactions are made with the condition of those who have even the strongest claim on his liberality. All privileges,

all exemptions, all bribes, he denounces. He urges greater equality in the imposition and better modes of collection of the taxes. One is grieved to suppress a single word of this most noble letter, but we must hasten to its conclusion: "Your Majesty will remember that, if I assume a burden perhaps above my strength, it is to you personally, it is to the just and good *man*, rather than to the *King*, that I devote myself." It is evident that he did not under-estimate the difficulty of the task that lay before him.

The short period of his ministry was marked by four important measures: 1. The decree in 1774, restoring free trade in grain within the bounds of France; 2. An edict in 1776, in favour of free trade in wine; 3. An edict, in 1776, for the suppression of *corveés;* 4. An edict, in the same year and month, for the abolition of *jurandes*, or guilds.

When Voltaire read the preamble of the first decree he wrote to D'Alembert: "I have just read Turgot's masterpiece. Methinks I behold new heavens and a new earth." Almost incredible in number and complexity were the restrictions with which even the home-trade in corn was obstructed. It is obvious that Yorkshire is not more affected (if the quantity be the same) by the importation of corn from America than by that of corn from Norfolk; and in this spirit it was that the restrictive acts were conceived. Each province was expected to gain by the exclusion, more or less complete, of the produce of every other. Turgot stood almost alone in his conviction that such restrictions, however good in purpose, could do only evil to all parties concerned, and some local scarcity, which led to clamour against the removal of grain, swelled the tide of his unpopularity.

As regards the *corveé*, it is noteworthy that, in substituting a tax equitably imposed, Turgot felt himself compelled to exempt the clergy, in order, as he said, that he might not have two quarrels on hand at once.

In like manner, in the abolition of the *jurandes*, certain temporary and partial exceptions were made regarding pharmacy, goldsmith work, printing and bookselling, occupations over which it was believed that the state should exercise peculiar *surveillance*, or maintain certain restrictions, of course, in the interest of the public.

All these, and other measures, Turgot sought not merely to impose by decree, but to justify by long and able exposition of the reasons in their favour. It is impossible here even to enumerate the many useful reforms that he had in view, the many useful enterprises that he endeavoured to promote. He introduced something like order into the finances; he caused creditors of long standing to be paid. What is especially to be noted, he refused to accept a gift called *pot de vin* (Anglice a bribe), of 50,000 livres, which the farmers-general made annually to the Controller-General, and forbade every such present for the future. Interest fell from 5½ in 1774 to 4 per cent, and his negotiations for a loan from Holland of 60 millions of francs at 5 per cent were broken off only by his retirement from office.

What he accomplished in whole or in part was not equal in importance to what he planned for the future—a future not to him reserved. But of all this, not excepting his great projects of a political constitution, and of a truly national system of education, I cannot now speak. Much of what Turgot strove or hoped to effect in peace and order was in part accomplished as the result of the Revolution, which was now approaching with rapid strides.

Everything, within and without, was against him. Of the twenty months that his ministry lasted, seven were spent in severe pain from gout, which endangered his life, and rendered work impossible. A terrible epidemic* among the cattle ravaged the South of France. A bad harvest called into action popular prejudice and popular violence against the decree of September 1774, proclaiming the freedom of trade in grain. Encouraged, it is not improbable, by the intrigues of Turgot's political rivals, brigand troops appeared not only in the provinces but in Paris itself, forcing sales below the market price, seizing and then destroying grain, burning barns and farm-houses, sinking boats laden with grain, or obstructing their passage to the capital. A mob marched upon Versailles—the precursor of one still more formidable at no great distance of time—and the poor young king, with the best intentions, no doubt, but as ignorant of the laws of trade as most collegians of his years are even at this day, ordered the price of bread to be fixed at two sous the pound. Cheapness was to be proportioned to scarcity and not to abundance! The minister, Maurepas, who disliked and dreaded Turgot, took no measures repressive or preventive, and sought in the amusement of the opera a relief, which he little needed, from the cares of state. Turgot, however, was equal to the occasion, and put down the disorder with the strong hand. But all, as I have said, was against him. The nobility, the clergy, the court, the moneyed interest, the monopolists, and the privileged of every kind, had too good reasons for hating

* I am quite aware of the etymological objection to the application of this word to cattle; but the less specific French word "*épizootie*" is scarcely as yet naturalised in England.

him and his measures, while among the people whose good he sought throughout there was no intelligence on which he could rely for aid. With the exception of Malesherbes, his staunch friend, who retired in despair, all the ministry were hostile, and Maurepas saw that the time had come for driving him from office. The parliament refused to sustain the decrees in the direction of freedom of industry and trade, and appealed to the King. A war of pamphlets broke out, but the battle was not to the strong in argument. Morellet, Condorcet, and even Voltaire, wrote and spoke in vain. The King himself, Turgot's sole remaining stay, began to fail him. He trusted and loved Turgot, it cannot be doubted; and as little can it be doubted that he had the national welfare deeply at heart. When he made him controller-general, he had been told, in words and in a spirit not yet out of date, that Turgot was an infidel. "What matter," he replied, "if he is an honest man." He had, on trying occasions, told Turgot, "Fear nothing. You shall always have my support." At a later time, he said: "There are only M. Turgot and myself who love the people." In the same year, 1776, Condorcet wrote to Voltaire: "The King has shown, as regards the edict, a steady industry, a spirit of justice, a desire for his people's good, and a courage, which may well console those interested in the public welfare." But to the distrust inspired on public grounds was added the effect of an infamous intrigue. Forged letters were sent from Paris to Vienna, and there posted to Turgot, as if from an intimate friend; replies, too, were forged, and the postmaster, D'Ogni, intercepted all, and forwarded them to the King. Dupont de Nemours vouches for this story, which he says he derived from the Marquis d' Angiviller,

whom the King made his confidant. These letters contained offensive expressions against not only the Ministers, but the Queen and the King himself. Maurepas, to whom they were shown, was not likely to suggest doubts of their genuineness. The King, instead of laying them before Turgot, treated him with increasing coldness. Turgot, firm in his consciousness of integrity, resented this, and wrote stern letters to the King, in one of these reminding him of Charles I. of England and Charles IX. of France. This the King returned in a sealed envelope, inscribed, "Letter from M. Turgot."

Turgot would accept no hint to resign. He would not retire; he preferred to be dismissed. One day, as he was reading some papers to the King, his Majesty asked "Will it soon be finished?" "Yes, sire," said Turgot. "So much the better," said the King. And so they parted, never again to meet! A truly memorable parting, of which the King, in after years, had doubtless bitter thoughts. On the 12th of May, 1776, Turgot received his dismissal. It was handed to him as he was drawing up an edict. He laid down his pen, saying: "My successor will finish it." Well has it been remarked that "the true successor of Turgot, that was to resume and carry on his work, not with the precarious help of a vacillating King, but with the backing of an insurgent nation, was the great Constituent Assembly."

Very touching are the words which Turgot addressed to the King: "I have done what I believed to be my duty, by showing you, with a frankness unreserved and unexampled, the difficulties of my position, and what I thought of yours. If I had not done so, I would have held myself guilty towards you. You, doubtless, have judged other-

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wise, since you have withdrawn your confidence from me; but, even if I should have been in error, you cannot but do justice to the feeling that has actuated me. My whole desire is that you may always be able to believe that I was in error, and that the dangers which I showed you were chimeras. I wish that time may not justify my forebodings, and that your reign may be as happy and as tranquil, both for you and for your people, as they hoped it would be, in accordance with your principles of justice and beneficence."

Great was the rejoicing of both high and low at the news of Turgot's fall. Voltaire, however, whose testimony outweighs "a theatre of others," wrote to D'Alembert: "Ah! what do I hear? France would have been too happy. What will become of us? I am struck to the earth. I see only death before me since M. Turgot is dismissed. This thunder-stroke has fallen on my brain and on my heart." Soon after he addressed to Turgot his "Epistle to a Man," and, on occasion of his triumphal reception in Paris, in 1778, he openly embraced Turgot, and said "Suffer me to kiss the hand that has signed the redemption of the people."

Turgot quietly resumed his studies and his correspondence with eminent men. Science and literature divided his time and thoughts. The thermometer and the Fourth Book of the Æneid combined to relieve the tediousness of his sleepless and painful nights. Much of what he wrote is lost, not excepting, alas! his correspondence with Adam Smith, whose great work he lived long enough to read and to criticise. It does not appear, however, to have modified in any important respect his economic creed, any more than it affected that of

Morellet, who translated it, or of Dupont de Nemours, who discussed it with Jean Baptiste Say. Turgot was the author of the Latin line, for ever famous, on Franklin's portrait:

Eripuit cœlo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.
He wrested the lightning from heaven, and the sceptre from tyrants.

One indication of his thoughtful and wise benevolence I am sure you will thank me for quoting. When the war broke out between France and England, after the declaration of American independence, M. Sartine, the Minister of Marine, received, from a hand to him unknown, a note proposing that the ship of Captain Cook, then on a scientific expedition, should be respected by the French navy. To this suggestion the Government assented. After Turgot's death the original was found among his papers. It runs thus:—"Captain Cook, one of the most skilful officers of the English Royal Navy, after having twice circumnavigated the globe, after having, in the course of those two voyages, been the first to give to Europe an exact knowledge of the Southern Hemisphere, greatly improved navigation, enriched geography and natural history with a multitude of useful discoveries, has undertaken a third voyage, in order to survey and to describe the coasts, the islands, and the seas at the north of Japan and of California. He sailed from Plymouth in July, 1776, in the ship 'Resolution,' the same that he commanded in his second voyage. This vessel of four to five hundred tons, and with a crew of little more than a hundred men, is not fitted for warlike operations: it was originally built as a collier. Captain Cook is probably now on his way back to Europe. His

expedition having for its sole object the extension of human knowledge, interesting, consequently, every nation, it is worthy of the magnanimity of the King not to allow its success to be thwarted by the hazards of war. In the case of rupture between the two crowns, it is proposed that His Majesty should order all the officers of his navy, or privateers, who may encounter Captain Cook, to abstain from all hostility towards him or his vessel, to allow him freely to continue his voyage, and to treat him in all respects as it is customary to treat the officers and the ships of neutral and friendly nations,—informing him of this mark of the King's esteem for his person, and warning him that His Majesty expects him, on his part, to abstain from any hostile act. It seems expedient to report this order to the ministers of his Britannic Majesty."

To my mind, and, I doubt not, to yours, there is something truly noble and deeply affecting in this spectacle of a great statesman, though disgraced and worn by disease, turning his thoughts, in mingled wisdom and kindliness, to the promotion by the same act of human knowledge and international courtesy.

Here let us leave Turgot! On the 21st of March, 1781, unmarried, in his 54th year, three years after Voltaire and Rousseau, he died calmly and firmly as he had lived. A few hours before his death, he had discussed with his friends some new experiments in electricity.

Of him, as of some others, it may be said that he lived long enough for fame, such as good men value, but not long enough for his country or for the world. If any think that his life, as regards its great objects, was a failure, let them pause a moment, and consider what it is

really to fail; what it is really to succeed.* Within what lapse of time shall we pronounce the sentence of failure or of success? Nothing evil can permanently prevail, nothing good is capable of permanent failure. Individual human success, compared with man's capacities and desires, is ever partial and chequered. Individual action is but a link in a long, long chain, stretching far back into the past, and farther into the future. To himself it was probably a blessing that he lived not to see the Revolution which he vainly strove to prevent by anticipating what of its work was beneficent, and which, had he lived, he might still have been powerless to arrest. But he indicated the course to be taken to render force either needless or beneficial. As it has been well said: "Justice and reason finally triumphed eleven years later with the Revolution, as far as circumstances permitted. Turgot wished the triumph to be pure and peaceful, through the power of a royal legislator. There was the dream; but it was the dream of a great soul."

So much of Turgot's life. In the next lecture I shall speak of his writings.

* Many years ago, in the "*Salon*" at Paris, I saw what struck me as an instructive comment on vulgar notions of success and failure. Side by side, almost touching each other, stood two marble busts; one was Jesus Christ crowned with thorns, the other was Louis Napoleon crowned with laurels! The juxtaposition is infinitely suggestive.

Lecture II.

TURGOT'S WRITINGS AND OPINIONS.

Of Turgot's life, which in the former lecture we reviewed, the leading incidents may be very briefly recapitulated. Born in 1727,—educated, as the phrase is, first at the college of Louis le Grand, then at the college of Plessis, then at the Sorbonne,—abandoning the clerical for the legal profession, with a view to employment in the civic administration,—in 1753 nominated Master of Requests; in 1761 appointed Intendant of the "generality" of Limoges—holding that office for thirteen years; in 1774 appointed Secretary of State for the Department of the Marine; and, five weeks later, Controller-General,—dismissed after twenty months of service,—retiring into private life,—he died in 1781, aged 54 years, about three years after the birth of our own Lord Brougham, who till very lately survived to link our time to that pre-revolutionary period now seemingly so distant.

The casual notice in the former lecture of Turgot's various writings must have sufficed to show that within the time at our disposal it is impossible to review them *seriatim*, or even fitly to discuss them when arranged in groups according to the subjects of which they treat. Physical Science—including Chemistry, Geology, Geography, Astronomy; Metaphysics, Philology, Theology; Economics—including Taxation and Finance; Politics and general Literature,—all occupied by turn, and almost

simultaneously, his incessantly active mind. Had he been solely and professedly an author, his writings would in mere extent have done honour to his industry. To him, as to Sir William Jones, change of occupation was the only rest needed or desired. Choice, then, not only of works, but of subjects, is necessary, and I think it best to direct your attention chiefly to those subjects which are most closely connected with the great business of his life as statesman and administrator. In this way, I am aware, it is inevitable that Turgot should suffer in our estimate of him as a comprehensive and systematic thinker. By him, more than by most even eminent men, all subjects were regarded from the same points of view, and were linked together by common principles; while in few men indeed could we find a more constant blending of the moral element with the intellectual. Those of his writings, however, which bear on human conduct, on the relations of individuals to each other, of individuals to the state, of the state to individuals, of rights to duties, of material progress to moral condition,—best exemplify (as far as they go) this mental harmony and completeness. At the same time, they serve better than any others to illustrate at once the early maturity of his intelligence, the essential consistency of his convictions throughout his life, and the sagacity and firmness with which he held fast by principles still imperfectly recognised among even the most forward nations of the earth.

In these writings there is very much that was at the time new, and that is true for all time; much that subsequent experience and inquiry and discussion have only confirmed,—so that, at times, one knows not whether

most to admire the originality of his doctrine, and its soundness, especially when compared with notions then almost everywhere prevailing, or to wonder at the slowness with which truths so clearly and eloquently taught have made their way to popular acceptance since his time.

But his economic and political writings do something more than illustrate the continual co-operation of the moral and intellectual faculties in his finely-balanced nature. Two classes of thinkers in political and social philosophy may here be hastily distinguished, without attempting to assign the higher place to either. The one sets out with the notion of justice, whencesoever derived, and howsoever reached, intuitively or otherwise, and, having determined what is just, concludes that the interests, whether of individuals or of nations, must be in conformity with that, and with nothing other or less. The other sets out with an inquiry into the operation of various courses of conduct or policy on the general welfare, and having determined which course promotes, and which obstructs, the general welfare, pronounces the former right and the latter wrong. Both schools may, and commonly, perhaps, do agree in approving and in disapproving the same sets of things, and by both the just and the widely expedient are held to be identical. The difference is less in the goal than in the starting-point. To the former the just is the expedient; to the latter, the expedient is the just. Of the latter school, Bentham may be taken as the type; of the former, Turgot is a representative. We shall see throughout that his first question commonly, if not always, is—What is just, what is right? and that then only does he investigate its practical result. It is not for us here to balance the respective merits of the *utilitarian* and

what may be called the *intuitive,* or *a priori* schools of morals. It is of more importance that we should repeat that this great theoretical difference does not seem to affect the practical result. It would be a libel to charge the utilitarian with indifference to justice; and an equal libel to charge the *a priori* moralist with indifference to the public weal. Of the same grand unity one phase more attracts one set of natures; the other phase more attracts another. Turgot says, at the end of his Memoir on "Mines and Quarries":—"It may confidently be predicted, in any matter whatsoever, that the profound study of the true principles of legislation, and that of the public interest rightly understood, will lead precisely to the same result." Bentham would have said that the profound study of the public interest rightly understood will lead, as nothing else can, to the discovery of the true principles of legislation.

In like manner, Turgot always argues from the individual to the community or the state, and not from the state or the community to the individual. No seeming gain, or advantage to the community can, in his view, compensate for the slightest injustice to the individual. How far this doctrine differs from that of the great philosophers, as well as from the practice, of antiquity, I need not say. In ancient practice, however, the evil results of making the interest of the community paramount over that of the individual were intensified by a false estimate of the interest of the community itself. On this side error is much more easy, and likely, than on the other, for what, it may well be asked, can the interests of the community be but those of—I do not say *an* individual, but—*the* individual?

It is time, however, that I should allow Turgot to be heard in his own person, and in his own words, so far as I can render them into a language not his own. Most truly does M. Daire remark: "The thousand indications of that profound morality which inspired all his acts, and the secret of that active philanthropy which never lost its way in the fields of the ideal, must be sought in the original documents themselves, because nowhere does the aspect of this good man seem more striking than in his own writings."

In various parts of his works, Turgot protests eloquently against the notion that self-interest is the spring of all human actions; and nowhere more eloquently than in his letters to Condorcet upon Helvetius, whose teaching exercised no small influence at that time. Of the well-known work "Sur l'Esprit," he says:—"In no place does he show a profound knowledge of the human heart; nowhere does he analyse the true needs of man; nowhere does he seem to suspect that man is under a necessity to love. One who had ever felt this need would not have said that self-interest is the only principle that makes men act. He would have understood that, in the sense in which this proposition is true, it is a puerility, or a metaphysical abstraction, from which no practical consequence can be drawn, since it is, in fact, equivalent to saying that man desires only what he desires."

In his earlier essay, on the benefits which Christianity has conferred on mankind, he says further:—"Man finds in his heart that tenderness towards all men which Providence has planted there, but of which the intensity, proportioned to their mutual needs, stronger in nearness, seems to vanish as it spreads over a vaster circumference. Near to us, men have more need of us, and our heart

tends more swiftly towards them. Beyond the reach of our aid—what need have they of our tenderness? They escape from our affection and our benefits only by escaping from our sight. Hence that vivacity of feeling graduated according to the distance of objects from us; hence the love of our relatives and our friends so lively and so tender; that of our country, and of the state that protects us, a love, perhaps, more active than keen; lastly, that more extended love of humanity which seems feebler, but of which all the scattered forces unite to subdue our souls at the sight of one who suffers:—degrees all just though unequal, all weighed in the equitable balance of the goodness of God."

"It is false," he writes to Condorcet, "that the moral sentiments do not influence men's judgments, men's actions, men's affections. The proof is that men need an effort to overcome their sentiment, when it is opposed to their interest. The proof is that they feel remorse. The proof is that the very interest which they pursue at the cost of honesty is often founded on a sentiment in itself honest and only ill-regulated. The proof is that they are moved by romances and by tragedies, and that a romance in which the hero should act in conformity with the principles of Helvetius would displease them greatly."*

* It is a grievous necessity to distinguish here between two things which only the greatest confusion or the greatest perversity of mind could ever have confounded, *viz.*, the *selfish* system thus assailed, and the *utilitarian*, or, in the language of Comte, the *altruistic* system of morals. The pursuit of "the greatest happiness to the greatest number" cannot, surely, be called selfish,—unless, indeed, the greatest number be held to be number one. These two theories Miss Cobbe, in her eloquent treatise on "Intuitive Morals," is careful to distinguish, though she is opposed to both. Adopting a term used by Kant, she calls the former *Private*, and the latter *Public*, *Eudaimonism*.

But while he thus pleads for the recognition of what are called the unselfish sentiments, of sympathy and benevolence, as powerful springs of human action, he does not regard them as above the need of guidance, and even restraint, by that which he holds to be the true law of conduct—JUSTICE. Justice is the rule of these virtues, as of all else. "No virtue," he says, "in whatever sense we take the word, can dispense with justice; and I no more value those who do great deeds, at the expense of justice than I do poets who fancy that they can produce great beauties by imagination without being true* to nature.* What, then, is the foundation, what, then, is the essence of justice? On this point I cannot see, as has been attempted to show, that Turgot's view ever materially changed. To Condorcet he writes:—"I do not believe that morality in itself can ever be local. Its principles are everywhere founded on the nature of man and on his relations with his fellows, which do not vary except in very extraordinary circumstances. But the judgment to be pronounced on the actions of individuals is a problem much more complicated, and infinitely variable, taking into account local opinions and the prejudices of education. In morals, I am a great enemy to indifference, and a great friend to indulgence, of which I have often as great need as any other man. It is, I believe, from confounding these two so different points of view, in judging of the morality of actions, that some fall into excessive rigour in testing individual actions according to general ideas of morality, without regard to circumstances which excuse the individual; and that others regard all actions as indifferent,

*The antithesis in the original of *justice* and *justesse* it is not easy in English to render closely. *Justness* fails to express the meaning.

and see in them only physical facts, because there are few that may not admit excuse in some given circumstances." I do not see that this basing of morality, equity, justice, on "the nature of man and on his relations with his fellows," is at all at variance with his earlier writings, in which he declares that equity is "the very order of the plans of Providence for the happiness of all individual men." Surely, if a Providence exists, the nature of man and his relations with his fellows must be in conformity therewith.

Condorcet indeed affirms that Turgot held the truths of morals to be independent of all speculative opinions—that is, I suppose in Theology (to which, by the way, some of our scientific friends speak as if all speculation were confined). This is a great truth; it would be a blessing if it were generally understood, and more constantly kept in view. It would be well if we learned the nature of man and of society from the study of the facts around us, and within us, instead of forcing the facts into a cramped accordance with some preconceived theological system. But in the recognition of human nature, so studied, as of divine creation, and of the social order, so studied, as of divine appointment, I see no inconsistency, no contradiction. It is probable enough that Turgot, as his experience of affairs increased, and as the impressions of his early theological training grew faint, was less disposed in later life to give prominence to the theological aspect of these questions, and to argue from *a priori* assumptions of Providential design; but I find no reason to believe that his convictions ever faltered as to the accordance of the social ideal with the divine order.

Justice, then, it is the business of the State to maintain

between man and man. But what is justice between man and man if it be not that every man be free to pursue his own interest, so long and so far as he shall not infringe the rights of others in a similar pursuit? In his second letter on Toleration (1754), he says:—"The principle that nothing can restrict the rights of society over the individual but the greater good of society, appears to me false and dangerous. Every man is born free; that freedom can never rightly be restrained unless it degenerate into license, that is to say, unless it cease to be freedom by becoming usurpation. Liberties, like properties, are bounded by each other. The liberty to injure has never existed in the face of conscience. The law ought to forbid it because conscience does not permit it. The liberty to act without doing injury to others cannot, on the contrary, be restrained by any but tyrannical laws. Governments are far too much accustomed always to sacrifice the well-being of individuals to pretended rights of society. It is forgotten that society exists for individuals—that it is instituted only to protect the rights of all, by securing the accomplishment of all mutual duties."

In this passage, exception may fairly be taken to one short sentence, that in which he says: "The law ought to forbid it *because* conscience does not permit it." This is to make the domain of state-law co-extensive with that of conscience, the less with the greater, the lower with the higher,—a position which Turgot himself, in the very same letter, clearly disclaims. He says: "To affirm that all offences are cases of conscience, including those in which violence injures civil society, is true, but what then? God could punish Cartouche; but was he broken on the wheel because he had offended God? All that

injures society is subject to the tribunal of conscience; but what offends conscience is punishable only because it violates the public order."

Law, then, is authoritative only when based upon justice, whether it be made by one or by many. "Laws," he says, as quoted by Condorcet, "cannot be legitimate if they do not fulfil two conditions: the first, of proceeding from a power legitimately instituted; the second, of not violating in any respect the natural rights which they ought to protect. . . These two conditions have often been confounded; not so much because we see bad laws spring up in absolute governments (for bad laws exist in all governments), but because unjust laws, when they proceed from the authority of one man, appear unjust in the eyes of the multitude, while the acts of injustice committed by a people appear such only to the wise. Besides, in the one case, the people seem sacrificed to a few individuals; in the other, a few individuals seem sacrificed to the general welfare, or the general existence."

In the same spirit, in 1778, he wrote to Dr. Price: "How happens it that you are almost the first among your literary men who has shown the falsity of the notion, hackneyed by almost all republican writers, that liberty consists in being subject to laws only, as if a man oppressed by an unjust law were free? This would not be true even were it supposed that all the laws are the work of the assembled nation; for, assuredly, the individual has also his rights, which the nation can take from him only by an illegitimate use of the public force."

Is it treasonable to hint that, even in these our days, when the omnipotence, if not the infallibility, of majorities is so loudly proclaimed, such words have in them a useful

warning? Of more than Roman councils, may it not be pertinently asked—how many fallibles make up the infallible?

The state, then, existing for the protection of individual rights, the question arises—what are those rights? Among them a first rank must be assigned to the right of labour,—"*le droit du travail*," which is a very different thing from the *droit au travail*, the right to labour, so fiercely contended for in the French assembly of 1848. The right to be free to labour is one thing; the right to be supplied by others with materials on which, and instruments with which, to labour, is quite another thing. The difference is not greater than between freedom to eat and the right to be fed. The restrictions on this freedom, this right, which now come from below, or beside, in those days came mostly from above. But the pretext is ever the same,—the general welfare; A being supposed to gain by the tying of B's hands, B by the tying of A's, so that both gain, and so on, all through the alphabet. No individual right seemed to Turgot more sacred than this—freedom to work, none more directly derived from the *wants* on the one hand, and the *powers* on the other, with which humanity has been constituted. In the preamble to the decree of February, 1776, abolishing *jurandes*, or guilds, the question is argued with great ability. It is the King who is made thus to speak: "This illusion has been carried so far by some as to maintain that the right of labour was a royal right, which the prince could sell, and which his subjects must buy. We hasten to repudiate this position. God, by creating man with needs, by rendering labour necessary for his maintenance, has made the right of labour the property of every man; and this property is the first, the most sacred, the most imprescriptible of all.

"We regard it as one of the first duties of our justice, and as one of the acts most worthy of our beneficence, to free our subjects from all invasions of this inalienable right of humanity. We purpose, accordingly, to abolish those arbitrary institutions which forbid the indigent to live by his labour; which repulse a sex whose weakness has greater needs and less resources, and which seem by condemning it to inevitable suffering, to league with misery and profligacy; which extinguish emulation and industry, and render useless the talents of those whom circumstances exclude from the close body of a craft-union; which deprive the State and the Arts of all the intelligence which strangers might introduce; which retard the progress of those arts by the manifold difficulties put in the way of inventors, with whom different crafts dispute the right of working discoveries which they have not made; which, by the vast expenses that artisans are obliged to incur, in order to acquire permission to labour; by the endless lawsuits among all these crafts on account of these several exclusive privileges, load industry with an enormous impost, burdensome to subjects, unproductive to the State; which, finally, by the facility which they afford to the members of the crafts to league together, become an instrument of monopoly, and favour schemes whose object is to raise beyond its natural level the cost of the articles most needful for the subsistence of the people.

"In this act of justice we shall not be arrested by the fear that a multitude of artisans will use the freedom restored to all, so as to practise crafts of which they are ignorant, and that the public will be inundated with articles badly made. Liberty does not produce these evil

results in places where it has been long established. The workmen in the suburbs and in other places do not work less skilfully than those in the heart of Paris. Every one knows, besides, how illusory is the working of *jurandes* as regards the perfection of work; and that, all the members of corporations being led by *esprit de corps* to support each other, an individual who complains is always worsted, and is wearied out by seeking from court to court a justice more costly than his original grievance. Those who know the course of trade know also that every important enterprise of traffic or of industry needs the co-operation of two sets of men,—capitalists, who advance the materials and the tools needful in each case, and workmen, who labour for stipulated wages. Such is the true origin of the distinction between contractors *(entrepreneurs)*, or employers, and workmen (or *compagnons*), which is founded on the nature of things, and does not depend on the arbitrary institution of guilds. Certainly those who employ their capital in a business have the greatest interest in confiding their materials to good workmen only; and we need not fear that they will take bad workmen at hazard, who would spoil their goods, and alienate their customers. It must be assumed also that capitalists will not risk their means in a craft which they do not know well enough to be able to choose good workmen, and to overlook their work. We shall not fear, then, that the suppression of apprenticeships, of journeymanships *(compagnonnages)** and of 'master-pieces' will expose the public to be badly served.

* The reader may be here referred to George Sand's very interesting work, "*Le Compagnon du Tour de France*," especially the preface.

"We shall not fear that a sudden rush of new workmen will ruin the old, and give a dangerous shock to trade.

"In the places in which commerce is most free, the number of traders and of workmen of every kind is always limited by, and necessarily proportioned to, the demand, that is, to consumption. It will not go beyond that proportion in the places where liberty shall be restored. No new capitalist would risk the loss of his means in a doubtful enterprise, in which he would have to fear the competition of all the employers already established, with the advantages of organisation and of a set of customers already provided. The masters who now compose the corporations, while they lose the exclusive privilege which they have in selling, will gain in buying by the suppression of the exclusive privileges of all other crafts. The artisans will gain from having no longer to depend in the making of their products, on the masters of many other crafts, each of whom claimed the privilege of supplying some indispensable portion. Merchants will gain by being able to sell all sorts of goods accessory to their chief commerce. All will gain, especially in being no longer subject to the chiefs and officers of their craft, in having no more to pay the frequent dues of visit, in being freed from a host of contributions for useless or mischievous expenses, costs of ceremonies, of banquets, of assemblies, of lawsuits, as frivolous in their object as ruinous from their number.

"While suppressing these guilds, for the general benefit of our subjects, we owe it to those of their legitimate creditors who have contracted with them on the faith of their authorised existence to provide for the security of their claims."

Such is the most important portion of a document of which, long though this extract is, I would fain cite the whole. It shows strongly that Turgot was no believer in the gospel of tied hands. Though there is, so far, equality between two men both handcuffed, as there is between two men with hands free, he saw clearly that the equality is on a lower level of productive power, with the result of common, and more than two-fold loss.

It is almost superfluous to say that of this right of labour for one's own support, he held slavery to be the most cruel, wicked, and mischievous violation—serfdom to be next in order, and after that excessive and unjust taxation.

The right of labour being granted, its corollary is the right of property, which is the product of labour, mediately or immediately. "Property," and here I quote from Condorcet, "is nothing more than the free disposal of what we possess legitimately. In a state of nature, whatever we enjoy without having in any way robbed another of it, constitutes this property. In a state of society,* it becomes that which we have received from our family, or have acquired by our labour, or have obtained by exchange. Laws regulate the manner of this right; but they do not create the right itself. The free disposal of property includes the power of selling, of giving, or of exchanging whatever is our own; and, if this property consists of commodities that we ourselves produce, of regulating their reproduction, and enjoying as we please what is derived

* It ought to be noted in passing that this implicit distinction between a supposed state of nature and the state of society, as if society were not a natural state, is not to be taken as expressive of Turgot's views. It savours much more of Rousseau than of Turgot.

from it. The only limit to this free disposal lies in doing nothing that may hurt the security, liberty, property, in a word, the rights of another."

This right of property, however, he held to be subject to certain restrictions, according to its nature or its source. Labour, and the occupation which is necessary for labour, he held to be the primal and rightful origin of property. Of the soil, he held that the proprietor owns not the soil itself, but only the value which his own labour or that of his predecessors has incorporated with it. This distinction, however, he does not seem to have urged to any clear or definite practical result, it may be from the difficulty of separating this added value from the soil. Bastiat has here followed in his wake, and, steadily recognising the distinction between the "*gratuitous utility*," which is the free gift of nature, and the "*onerous utility*," or *value*, which human labour has conferred, contends that the price of land is not more, while it may be less, than the equivalent of all the toil bestowed on its improvement. As Mr. Stirling, however, the translator of Bastiat's "Harmonies Economiques," has pointed out, this view fails to apply to those cases in which the soil commands a high price (or rent), not in consequence of what Turgot calls "*avances foncières*," or expenditure on its improvement, but in spite of, or even, as in the Highland deer-forests, in consequence of its very wildness, and the very absence of all attempt at cultivation. The kelp-shores cited by Adam Smith are another example; and so is the price of building-land, of which previous cultivation, if any, goes for nothing. One singular consequence indeed, if I may call it consequence, Turgot seems to have drawn from his premisses, viz: that the ownership of the surface-soil

does not carry with it the ownership of the minerals below;—a doctrine which, it might be shown, goes either too far or not far enough. Into this very tempting field of discussion, however, I must not enter. In view of present disputations, it is no blame to Turgot that he did not, and could not, go to the bottom of this grave question—the right of property in land. Less than most succeeding economists has he viewed this and other questions through the medium of historical legislation. Much less than most of these is he disposed to think that "whatever is is right."

Conquest he held to confer no solid or lasting right. The privileges of the nobles, feudal rights (so called), and state-offices sold by the sovereign, he excluded from his scheme of property. The power of bequest he did not admit without important restrictions. The family of the deceased he seems to have regarded as the rightful heirs, with equal division among the children, and, failing them, among the nearest relations; but on these points I do not know of any original or detailed exposition of his views. The authority of Condorcet, while not lightly to be disputed, cannot, I think, always be accepted without confirmation from other sources.

But on one point not less important we have Turgot's own statement of his conclusions. Corporate property he maintained to be wholly the creation of the state, existing solely in the interest of the state, and dependent on the will of the state. In the words of a recent commentator: "The state has always the rightful disposal of this property; it is the master of all foundations; without offence to justice, it can modify them, transform them, suppress them, employ their funds without regard to the will of the founders; it has no other rule to follow in this matter

than the general utility; and this right of the state is not a violation of the rights of individuals. If individuals had the right to dispose of their goods for all time after their death, if they had the power to determine its employment absolutely and in perpetuity, landed property and every other kind of capital would be fixed beyond all power of change; future generations would no longer employ them for the satisfaction of their own needs, and according to the state of their intelligence; the right of property, and consequently, of free labour, would for them no longer exist; they must conform in their mode of life to the ideas and to the will of past ages; the living would become the slaves of the dead. The right of constituting foundations is not, therefore, a consequence of the right of property inherent in the individual; this right, like every other, has its limit in the right of others; if not so, it would degenerate into privilege. Here the right of each generation is limited by the right of all succeeding generations."

To this summary I will add only, and without comment, two very brief extracts from the Essay on *Foundations*, which Turgot contributed to the Encyclopédie:—"We conclude that no work of man is made for immortality on earth; and, since foundations, being ever multiplied by vanity, would, in the long run, absorb all individual funds and properties, it is of inevitable necessity that we should be able to annul them. If all the men that ever lived had had a mausoleum, it would have been needful, in order to find land to cultivate, to overthrow those sterile monuments, and to disturb the ashes of the dead in order to feed the living." And again:—"A founder is one who wishes to make his will eternal *(éterniser)*;

now, though we should suppose his intentions always pure, how many reasons are there not for distrusting his wisdom? How easy is it not to do evil, while wishing to do good!" "There is every reason to presume that a foundation, however useful it may appear, will one day become at least useless, perhaps injurious, and will long remain so. Is not that consideration enough to arrest every *founder* who proposes to himself any other end than the gratification of his vanity?"

The inequality of conditions he regarded as a consequence of the rights of labour and of property. In a letter to Madame de Graffigny (1751), he says: "This diversity of conditions is a thing very important and very easy to justify by showing its necessity and its utility. Its necessity, because men are not born equal, because their strength, their talents, their passions, would always disturb the momentary equilibrium that might be established by law; families unequal in capacity and in strength have multiplied the causes of inequality. What would society be without this inequality of conditions? Every one would be reduced to what is barely necessary, or, rather, there would be many to whom even that would not be assured. Work cannot be carried on without implements and the means of living till the harvest has been reaped. Those who have not had the intelligence or the opportunity to acquire these things, have no right to deprive of them one who has earned them by his labour. If the idle and the ignorant were to rob the industrious and the skilful, all work would be discouraged, and misery would be general. It is more just and useful for all that those who have been deficient in either talent or good fortune should lend their arms to those who can give them

payment in advance, and secure for them a part in the yet future production."

From the same rights of labour and of property he deduced freedom of trade within and without the limits of the country. In this respect, the staunchest free-trader of our day can, I think, find no shortcoming on Turgot's part. In a letter to Dr. Josiah Tucker, dated 1770 (exactly, alas! one hundred years ago—so slow is human progress), he says: "I confess to you, I cannot help surprise that in a nation which enjoys freedom of the press, you should be almost the only author that has known and felt the advantages of free commerce, and that has not been misled by the puerile and sanguinary illusion of a pretended exclusive commerce. May the efforts of enlightened and humane politicians destroy this abominable idol, which still survives the mania of conquests and religious intolerance, as to which the world begins to be undeceived! How many millions of men have been immolated to those three monsters! I see with joy, as citizen of the world, the approach of an event which, more than all the books of philosophers, will dispel the phantom of the jealousy of commerce. I speak of the separation of your colonies from the mother country, which will soon be followed by the separation of all America from Europe.*

"It is then that the discovery of that part of the world will become truly useful to us. It is then that it will multiply our enjoyments far more abundantly than when we bought them with torrents of blood. The English, French, Spanish, all nations will enjoy sugar, coffee, indigo,

* He here, in 1770, repeats his prophecy of 1750. (See Lecture I, p. 8.) As yet, it has been fulfilled only in part.

and sell their several commodities as the Swiss do now; and they will have also, like the Swiss people, the advantage that these products will no longer serve as a pretext for intriguers to precipitate their nation into ruinous wars, and to overwhelm them with taxes."

In another letter, also to Tucker, in 1773, he says: "My principles in this matter (trade in corn) are absolute freedom to import, without distinction of vessels of this or that nation, and without any dues of entry; freedom equally absolute to export in every kind of vessel, without any export duty or restriction, even in times of scarcity; freedom within the country to sell to whom one chooses, when and where one chooses, without being obliged to take the grain to the public market, and without the interference of any one to fix the price of corn or of bread. These principles I would extend to every kind of merchandise, and this, as you know, is quite opposed to the practice of your government and of ours."

To Dr. Price he wrote, in 1778, a very memorable letter on the American Constitutions,* wherein he says: "The whole edifice" (of the present system) "has rested till now on the false basis of a very old and very vulgar policy, on the prejudice that nations, provinces, can have interests, as provinces and nations, other than that which individuals have in being free, and in defending their property against brigands and conquerors; a pretended interest in having more trade than others, in not buying goods from 'the foreigner,' in forcing the foreigner to consume their

* See the 4th volume of John Adams' collected works. This letter drew from Mr. Adams an elaborate defence in three octavo volumes. At bottom, then as in recent years, the conflict was between Federalism and Centralisation. Events have borne out Turgot's foresight.

products and their manufactures; a pretended interest in having a vaster territory, in acquiring this or that province, this or that island, this or that village; an interest in striking terror into other nations; an interest in triumphing over them by the glory of arms, or by that of arts and sciences.* Some of these prejudices are fomented in Europe, because the ancient rivalry of nations and the ambition of princes oblige all states to be armed in defence against their armed neighbours, and to regard military force as the chief object of government. America has this happiness, that it cannot, for a long time to come, have a foreign enemy to fear, if it be not divided against itself. Thus it can and must appreciate at their just value these pretended interests, these subjects of discord which are the only grounds of fear for liberty. With the sacred principle of the freedom of commerce, regarded as a result of the right of property, all the pretended interests of commerce disappear. The pretended interests of possessing more or less of territory are dispelled by the principle that the earth belongs not to nations but to the individual proprietors of lands."

Pardon me if I cite from this same letter another passage in which this French precursor of Bright and Cobden rises, like them, into a strain of the noblest eloquence. "It is impossible not to pray that this nation (the United States) may attain all the prosperity of which it is capable. It is the hope of the human race. It may

* These last few words may with advantage be meditated by some of our foremost advocates of "technical instruction." "The glory of superiority in arts and sciences," however, though it may be "the last infirmity of noble minds," is vastly better than that insane and wicked thirst of "military glory" which, even at this hour, threatens once more to desolate Europe on the most frivolous pretext.

become its model. It must prove to the world, by real fact, that men may be free, yet tranquil, and can dispense with the chains of every kind which tyrants and charlatans of every robe have sought to impose on them under pretext of the public weal. It must give the example of political freedom, religious freedom, commercial and industrial freedom. The asylum which it opens to the oppressed of all the nations must console the world. The ease with which men may escape to it from the evils of bad government will force the governments of Europe to be just and to be intelligent; the rest of the world will little by little open its eyes to the nothingness of the illusions by which politicians have been mocked. But for this end America must guard itself from these illusions, and it must not again become a copy of our Europe, a mass of divided powers, disputing with each other territories or profits of trade, and continually cementing the slavery of their people with their own blood. All enlightened men, all the friends of humanity, must at this moment unite their wisdom, and join their reflections to those of wise Americans, to assist in the great work of their legislation. This would be your worthy task; would that I could stimulate your zeal; and if in this letter I have given way more than I ought to the effusion of my own thoughts, this desire has been my only motive, and will excuse, I hope, the tedium which I have caused you. I pray that the blood which has flowed, and which may still flow in this quarrel, may not have been useless to the human race."

Can it be doubted that in such noble aspirations for the good of all mankind he found an ample solace for the loss of position, without the power of doing good?

From what I have cited it is sufficiently apparent that neither the now extinct "Mercantile System," nor "Protection," nor "Navigation Laws," nor the still lingering phantom of "Reciprocity," had for him the least illusion. But one other passage may be cited from Condorcet, which shows still more clearly how thoroughly Turgot comprehended the true interest of nations in their commercial dealings with each other, and which has an important bearing on present or recent discussions of "Reciprocity." "If we consider the similarity of one people to another, we may assert that national interests cannot be concerned in those cases where these interests are said to be opposed. If, indeed, the heads of one nation could derive real advantage from the subjugation of another nation, it is, in effect, impossible that this advantage should extend to the whole body of the people. The more a nation is surrounded with rich, powerful, and industrious neighbours, the more readily will it find among them the supply of its wants, and the encouragement of its industry. It would, doubtless, be obliged to produce such commodities only as are best adapted to the nature of the soil, and to practise only such kind of business as can resist competition; but this, instead of being a disadvantage, would be, on the contrary, a general benefit. Freedom of foreign commerce is the only way of placing commerce out of the power of monopoly. It is of equal importance that in the sale of our commodities foreign competition should render us independent of native merchants; and that this same competition, by supplying us with foreign merchandise, should protect us from the avidity of our own manufacturers. *Even if other nations should prohibit our commodities, and shut their ports*

against us, it would still be our interests to let our ports remain open; a reciprocity of prohibitions serving no other purpose than to deprive us of foreign succour, and to oblige us to pay more dearly for our wants. It is for the common interest of nations to be well governed in their transactions with each other, to be as just in their dealings with foreigners as in dealing among themselves, and to preserve peace with neighbouring powers. Wars of vanity, ambition, and commerce, are equally fruitless. It can never be the interest of one nation to attack another, to restrict the liberty of another, or to monopolise one branch of commerce to the exclusion of its neighbour. This may be considered as a general maxim in the same way as the interest of a nation is in unison with the common interest of every individual, and as the real interest of every individual differs not from the common interest of society."

Very fruitful in consequences is any good principle thoroughly understood. In 1787, at Crichoff, in White Russia, Bentham wrote his "Defence of Usury," which converted even Adam Smith, as he had the candour to acknowledge. Nearly twenty years before that time Turgot wrote his *Memoire* on "Loans of Money," in which he maintained not only the rightfulness of interest for loans of money, but the justice and the duty of leaving money to find its level in the market like all other commodities.* He says: "It is not these vain subtleties that

* See Lecky's "History of Rationalism," vol. ii., p. 294, note. He says: "On the whole there is not much in Bentham that was not anticipated by Turgot. In Italy, Genovesi, who was a contemporary of Turgot, advocated the abolition of usury laws." (Pecchio, "Storia della Economia Publico in Italia;" p. 114.)

render loan at interest legitimate; it is not even its utility, or rather its necessity as the support of commerce; it is legitimate on a still more general and worthy principle, since it is the base on which the whole edifice of society rests; I mean the inviolable right, attached to property, to be absolute master of what one owns, not to be deprived of it without one's consent, and to be able to attach to one's consent such conditions as one thinks fit. The owner of any article whatever may keep it, or give it, or sell it, or lend it gratuitously or for hire, either for a fixed, or for an indefinite time. If he sells, or if he lends, the price of the sale or of the loan is limited only by the will of him who buys or who borrows; and so long as this will is quite free, and as there is, further, no fraud on either side, the price is always just, and no one is injured. These principles are avowed by all when anything but money is in question, and it is evident that they apply to money no less than to any other thing. The ownership of money is not less absolute than that of a piece of furniture, a piece of stuff, or a diamond; he who owns it is not more bound to deprive himself of it gratuitously. To give it, to lend it gratuitously, is a laudable act which generosity inspires, which humanity and charity sometimes require, but which is never in the domain of rigorous justice. One may also either give or lend any sort of commodity; and one ought in certain cases. Beyond those circumstances in which charity requires that one should deprive one's self to succour the distressed, one may sell one's money, and, in truth, one does sell it when one gives it in exchange for a plot of ground, or for any equivalent return; one sells it for money when one gives money in one place to receive it in another, with a certain addition; or at one

time to receive it at another, with a similar addition, because the difference of times, as of places, makes a real difference in the value of money." And again (if these principles were adopted): "The trade in money would be free as all trade ought to be. The effect of this freedom would be competition, and the effect of this competition would be a lower rate of interest; not only because the disgrace and the risk attached to loans at interest" (under usury laws) "are a surcharge which the borrower must always pay, but because a larger amount of money which lies useless in coffers would come into circulation when prejudice, no longer confirmed by the authority of the laws, had by degrees given way to reason. Economy would become so much the more active in accumulating capital, when trade in money should become an outlet always open to it." The memoir is long and closely argued. It extends to fifty-three sections, and even now it deserves, and, I must add, needs to be studied in this country as well as in France.*

* In France, so late as 1849, a controversy was maintained with great ability between Proudhon and Bastiat, on the question not merely of laws against usury, but of the rightfulness of interest of any amount for the loan of money. I have before me a pamphlet entitled "Usury the Scourge of Nations: Money Interest an Everlasting Tax Levied by the Annuitant Class," 1870; by James Harvey; addressed to the Land and Labour League. The author says: "If interest of money is wrong, annihilate it," and maintains that interest is fundamentally wrong, and, *a fortiori*, usury. He proposes, however, not very logically or intelligibly, that "Money should not consist of the dearest metal known, but should be a mere paper instrument, authorised by the state, and issued in sufficient quantities to bring interest, if not to the point of utter annihilation, *at least to the lowest possible rate*" (p. 5.) If it is not *possible* to annihilate interest, why urge its annihilation? If interest is wrong, and its annihilation is possible, why stop short at the lowest possible rate; and what, besides, is the meaning of "the lowest possible rate?"

But regarding money, there are other questions, preliminary, much more difficult, and accordingly much more disputable and more disputed. Among these the relation of "paper money" to metallic money holds a prominent place. On this subject an unfinished memoir, entitled "*Valeurs et Monnaies*," and a letter written, at the age of twenty-two, to Abbé Cicé, of which part has been lost, give a full exposition of Turgot's views. It would be well, I think, if the "currency doctors" of this our time had read and mastered his clear and cogent reasoning. It is not a little curious to see how controversies, seemingly long ago extinct, do, like volcanoes, burst forth again in flame, largely mixed with smoke, sometimes in another place, sometimes in the same. The grand fundamental question, then as now, lay in a very narrow compass. Is the function of paper money the same exactly as that of metallic money? Is it independent of metallic money, or ought it to have a metallic basis? In order to answer these questions wisely, a preliminary question must be answered: What is the function of metallic money? In 1720, the Abbé Terrasson, in defence of the then waning system of the famous Law, had published a series of four letters, in which he contended that money of any kind is only a sign adopted to represent wealth, and to facilitate its exchange; that the nature of this sign is a matter of indifference; that money belongs to the State, and not to individuals; that the ruling power may withdraw gold and silver from circulation, substitute paper money for them, and exempt its subjects from taxation by periodic issues of paper money. This was the doctrine then generally held, and even Montesquieu, in his "Esprit des Lois," in 1748, defined money as "a sign

which represents the value of every kind of merchandise." The gist of this doctrine was obviously—that money is a mere sign of value, conventionally adopted; that the nature of this sign is indifferent, and, consequently, that paper, which is light and cheap, may, with advantage, be wholly substituted for metals, which are cumbrous and dear. I cannot now examine this very plausible and tempting theory, though it is still held by many very worthy and not irrational persons.* Turgot, however, then, as in his later writings, said that "paper money," so called, is not money proper, but a promise to pay money; that money proper is not a mere sign, but itself a veritable commodity, an article of commerce which, from its peculiar qualities, serves as a common measure of every other article; that, as a commodity, money is the property of individuals, and not of the State; and that credit, of which "paper money" is the token or pledge, or evidence, implies money in itself valuable, as such money implies other commodities.

But this subject would require a separate treatment, and must not detain us now. We must pass lightly over even his most elaborate and complete economic work, "Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth," which was first published in 1766, ten years before the publication of "The Wealth of Nations," and five before it was commenced. In 1770, Turgot sent a copy to Dr. Tucker, and through him it is not unlikely that it was made known to Adam Smith. It was written during a

* One of these, a personal friend, I ventured, some years ago, to congratulate on the then recent repeal of the paper duty, and on this ground, that, when the theory should be adopted, money would thus be rendered so much more abundant and accessible to the poor!

journey through his district of Limoges, in snatches of time, amidst numerous interruptions, and even hardships. The occasion of it was this: Two Chinese youths, who had been sent by the Jesuits to France, to pursue their studies, were about to return home, assisted by a pension from the government. Turgot not only gave them many books and scientific instruments, but wrote for them a set of "Questions on China," fifty-two in number; and, to help them in their replies, drew up this system of economic doctrine, which, notwithstanding all that has since been written, well merits the earnest study of every disciple of the science. Dupont de Nemours has made a careful comparison of the points of resemblance and of difference between this work of Turgot and that of Adam Smith. But it is the less necessary, even did time permit, to enter on this inquiry, because, in both respects, Turgot himself was the faithful though intelligent and thoughtful follower of one to whom the honour of originality is more justly due—the once famous, and ever memorable Francis Quesnay, the founder of the school of *Les Economistes*, as they were long styled, or *Les Physiocrates*, as they are now, more distinctively, designated.

Quesnay was physician to Louis XV., who called him his "thinker," and ennobled him with the *pansy* as his crest, that flower standing for thought—the French *pensée*—(as every reader of Hamlet knows.) He established at Versailles a printing press, and made the king print with his own hands these memorable words: "When the peasants are poor the kingdom is poor; and when the kingdom is poor the king is poor." On occasion of Adam Smith's second visit to Paris, in 1765, he associated much with Quesnay, as well as with Turgot (who was Quesnay's

junior by thirty-three years); he intended to dedicate to Quesnay his "Wealth of Nations," but was prevented by Quesnay's death, in his eightieth year, in 1774 (the year in which Louis XV. also died), two years before the appearance of that great work.* Of Quesnay's doctrine I must refrain from any full exposition here, and refer you to Mr. M'Culloch's Introductory Discourse, prefixed to his edition of "The Wealth of Nations." It cannot, however, be here omitted that his most distinctive tenet that agriculture is the only employment that yields a net revenue—a tenet in which he was followed by Turgot, Dupont, Mercier de la Rivière, and others,—but not by Adam Smith,—is now universally regarded as erroneous, though Adam Smith's own distinction between productive and unproductive labour finds less and less acceptance, and the question where and how to draw the line is still much discussed. The French economists in general frankly recognise the superiority of Adam Smith to Quesnay in this and in other respects, though they deny his priority, and with reason. One of their number has designated Smith the Amerigo Vespucci of economic science, Quesnay, of course, being the Columbus.

As to the respective merits of Turgot and Adam Smith, opinion is in France somewhat more divided, as will appear from four authorities that I will briefly cite. M.

* For three-and-thirty years there has hung over the fire-place in my library Willes' exquisite engraving, dated 1747, of the portrait of Du Quesnay, "Doctor utriusque Medicinæ," and Physician of the most noble Duke of Villeroy. It represents a man past middle life, seated among books, with loose robe and flowing wig. The brow is ample and beautifully formed; the face seems to sparkle with mingled acuteness and benevolence. It might be a handsome likeness of Voltaire; with all his intellect, but with more of kindliness and imagination, and less of sarcasm. To this portrait I owe my early interest in economics. See Appendix.

Batbie says of Turgot's "Reflexions": "The books which have been since published are not superior to this first essay, and Adam Smith's work itself, doubtless more complete and analytic, falls below it as a systematically connected whole. Putting aside the error of the physiocratic theory, it is as profound as it is luminous." Of the same work M. Daire says: "Never were more just ideas, on such a subject, concentrated in fewer pages. There is not, doubtless, in this work the whole of Adam Smith's book, just as the whole picture of a great master does not exist upon the canvass, when his genius has traced only the sketch: but suppose this sketch to be completed by an artist of equal merit, and you will have perhaps an exact notion of the respective share of glory that belongs to the pupil of Gournay, and to the philosopher of Glasgow. The first, with greater powers of generalisation, lays the fundamental principles of the science; while the second, gifted above all with the faculty of analysis, deduces from them numerous consequences with profound sagacity. We may dispute about the greater or less value of these two tasks; but to me it seems that neither ought to make us forget the other." M. Mastier says: "Though on those three important points Turgot shares the errors of Quesnay, he cannot be regarded as a mere disciple. He has elucidated, rectified, enriched the doctrine of his master: he is himself a master, and the precursor of Adam Smith." Lastly, M. Puynode says: "How can we help wondering at Dupont de Nemours for holding the '*Reflexions*' of Turgot to be superior to Adam Smith's inquiry published nine years later? As well might we set the '*Republique*' of Bodin above Montesquieu's '*Esprit des Lois*,' or the '*Tableaux de la Nature*' of Buffon

above the '*Systeme du Monde*' of Laplace. It is to prefer a vacillating light to a most brilliant sunrise. Turgot's '*Reflexions*' have the merit of a remarkable error remarkably expounded; the 'Inquiry' of Adam Smith is one of the most astonishing creations of the human mind. It has laid the basis of the whole economic science, while often reaching its highest summits. For myself, I can never read it afresh without thinking of the '*Theodicée*' of Plato, which comes so near to Christian doctrine."

To this eloquent and generous tribute to Adam Smith I most cordially subscribe; to this depreciation of Turgot I must, with sincere deference, demur. M. Daire seems to me somewhat nearer to the truth than M. Puynode.

On the question of taxation, a brief extract from his Memoir to the King about the suppression of the *Corvée* will impressively illustrate the feeling with which he regarded the system of his time. "What is taxation?" he asks. "Is it a burden imposed upon feebleness by force? This would be analogous to the foundation of a government solely on the right of conquest. Then the prince would be regarded as the common enemy of society; the strongest would defend themselves against him as they best could, the weakest would suffer themselves to be crushed. In that case, it would be natural that the rich and powerful should throw the whole burden on the weak and poor, and guard jealously this privilege.

"This is not our idea of a paternal government, founded on a Constitution, in which the monarch is raised above all to secure the happiness of all; in which he is the depository of the public power, in order to maintain the rights of each by justice within, and by military force against attacks from without. The expenditure of government

having for its object the interest of all, all ought to contribute to it, and the more advantage one derives from society, the more ought one to hold it as an honour to share its burdens. It is difficult, from this point of view, for the fiscal privilege of the nobility to appear just. If one looks at the question from the side of humanity, it is very difficult to congratulate one's self on being exempt from taxes as a gentleman, when one sees the pot of the peasant taken in execution.

"If we look at the question from the side of the political benefit and strength of a nation, one sees at a glance that if the privileged are numerous, and possess a great part of the national wealth, as the expenses of the State require a very large sum, it may happen that the sum is beyond the means of those who remain subject to taxation. Then it follows, either that the government is deprived of the means and defence that it requires, or that the non-privileged people are burdened beyond their strength, so that the State is at once impoverished and enfeebled.*" By the ignorance and injustice around him, Turgot was thus condemned to teach to the ruling powers the very alphabet of legislation.

But we must turn from Economics, and, ere we conclude, illustrate very briefly his doctrine regarding Freedom of Thought and of Speech, Religious Toleration, and

* It is curious to remark that while Turgot held, with Quesnay, that taxation should be laid upon the soil directly, because only the soil yielded a net revenue, out of which all taxes must directly or indirectly be paid, his opponents drew from the same premisses the opposite practical conclusion, that taxation might justly be levied on other property and its owners, because it would still, if indirectly, fall upon the soil. Landowners thus seemed to accept the theory and conform to it, while, in fact, giving themselves the benefit of the doubt as to its truth. See Appendix.

lastly, Education. "It is not error," he says, "that is opposed to the progress of truth. It is cowardice, self-conceit, the spirit of routine, all that encourages inaction." "You fear lest you should go astray by directing your mental energies to the discovery of new truths. You prefer peaceably to retain the opinions most generally received, whatever they may be. That is to say, you will not walk, lest you should break your legs. But in this very way your state is that of one who has had his legs broken: they are useless to you. And why has God given legs to men if not to walk, or mind, if not to think?"

Liberty of the press he maintained to be the greatest aid to a just government, and an invaluable corrective of its possible errors. Its operation in an unjust government is too obvious to be pointed out, or—to be endured. For just government he looked rather to the sovereign than either to the people themselves, whose ignorance and prejudices he distrusted and dreaded (not without reason in his time), or to the nobility, of whom Chamfort said that, if they were the intermediary between the king and the people, it was "as the hound is an intermediary between the hunter and the hare." * But to the sovereign, or to government of any kind, he denied all right to restrain conscience in matters of religion. His memoir on "Toleration," addressed, in 1775, to the King, is worthy of the disciple of John Locke, and may still be read with profit, as well as pleasure. He had endeavoured to induce the King not to take the oath for the persecution of heretics, and the King, it is said, undecided how to act, had, at this part of the coronation

* To this it may fairly be added that they did a deal of hunting on their own account.

service, muttered some unintelligible words. "Your oaths, sire," he says, "have been pronounced in presence of God and of your subjects. Justice from you is your subjects' right and interest. To commit an injustice in order to fulfil the formulas which you have been made to pronounce, would be to violate your obligations to God, to your people, and to yourself." "All sovereigns have not the same religion, and every religious man feels himself bound by conscience, for duty's sake and for his own salvation, to follow the religion which he believes to be true. In judging men, God will demand if they have believed and practised the true religion. He will not ask them if they have believed and practised the religion of their sovereign. How could he demand this, if all sovereigns are not of the true religion? Cast your eye over the map of the world, sire, and see how few countries there are whose sovereigns are Catholics. How can it be that the greater number of sovereigns in the universe being in error, they should all have received from God the right to judge of the true religion? If they have not this right, if they have neither the infallibility nor the divine mission which alone could confer it, how can they dare to take it on themselves to decide on the fate of their subjects, of their happiness or their misery for all eternity? Every man, by the principles of religion, has his soul to save; he has all the lights of reason and of revelation to guide him to the way of salvation; he has conscience to apply those lights, but that conscience is for himself alone. To follow his own conscience is the right and the duty of every man, and no man has the right to make his own a rule for another. Each answers for himself before God, and no one answers for another."

"Will the defenders of intolerance say that the prince has a right to command only when his religion is true, and that then he ought to be obeyed. No; even then he cannot, and ought not to, be obeyed; for if one ought to adopt the religion which he prescribes, it is not because he commands it, but because it is true; and it is not, and cannot be, because the prince commands it, that it is true. There is no man so absurd as to believe a religion true for such a reason. He, then, who submits in good faith does not obey the prince, but his own conscience; and the order of the prince adds not, and cannot add, any weight to the obligation which conscience thus imposes. Whether the prince does or does not believe a religion, whether he does or does not command it to be adopted, it is neither more nor less what it is, either true or false. The opinion of the prince is, then, absolutely foreign to the truth of a religion, and consequently to the obligation to adopt it; the prince has, then, as prince, no right to judge, or to command in this respect; his incompetence is absolute in matters of this order, which are not in his sphere, and in which the conscience of each individual has, and can have, no other judge but God alone."

The first part of this Memoir thus concludes: "How can religion command sovereigns, how can it permit them, to use their power to constrain their subjects in respect of religion? Can religion command, or permit, a crime? To command a crime is to commit one; he who commands an assassination is by every one regarded as an assassin. Now the prince who commands a subject to profess a religion which he does not believe, or to renounce that which he does believe, commands a crime; the subject who obeys is guilty of falsehood; he betrays his

conscience, he does a thing which God forbids. The Protestant who, for interest or through fear, becomes a Catholic; and the Catholic who, from like motives, becomes a Protestant, are guilty of the same offence. For it is not the truth or the error of an assertion that constitutes the falsehood or the perjury; he who affirms with an oath that to be true which he then believes untrue, is quite as much perjured as if the thing were actually untrue. Falsehood or perjury consists in the contradiction between the assertion and the belief of him who affirms or who swears."

The other two parts, of which Turgot seems to have kept no copy, were unhappily lost in the cabinet of the King. The first part was recovered from a rough but corrected copy, such as Turgot seldom made, for commonly he wrote without need for alteration, such were the orderliness of his thoughts, and the accuracy of his freest expressions. The iteration which marks it was not, we may believe, without design.

On Education he anticipated Rousseau, whose "*Emile*" was not published till 1762, and Rousseau was the acknowledged teacher of Pestalozzi. A few brief quotations will illustrate his opinions: "If we were to teach our children nothing but truths, and to talk with them only of what they can understand, there would scarcely be any more false thinkers." "Justness of thought is of all qualities that which has most influence upon the details of conduct, and that which nature has bestowed most equally and universally." The only source of public happiness is the possession of truths to which the order of society may be conformed. It is, therefore, useful, and even necessary, to increase, and especially to diffuse,

knowledge." "The moral instruction of the people ought to be absolutely distinct from both theological opinions and the ceremonies of worship. The morals of all nations have been the same; and almost everywhere they have been corrupted solely by being mixed with theology. The truth of the principles of morality is shaken by connecting them with opinions which are either openly controverted, or rejected in secret by a considerable number of men, and especially by those men who have the greatest influence on the fate of mankind. Factitious duties are mixed with real duties, though often opposed to them; and the latter are, in the meantime, always sacrified to the former. By this mixture, the natural order of duties is inverted, and real duties are evaded or violated on the plea of practising some imaginary virtue." "Since, then, a national education truly worthy of the name is not a chimera, the care of establishing and of perfecting it ought to be one of the first duties of those who guide a nation; and they ought, above all, to be careful not to abandon it to the management of priests, whose direct influence over the morals of the people is incompatible with the good order of society."

So far, as reported by Condorcet, in different parts of his *Vie de Turgot* (published in London anonymously in 1786). In a letter to Madame de Graffigny, of date 1751, Turgot says: "It is in pedantry that in our day education consists. We are taught everything in the opposite of nature's method. Take the rudiments; we begin by trying to cram into the heads of children a host of the most abstract ideas. Those whom all Nature invites to herself by every object, we tie up in one place; we occupy them with words which can offer to them no sense,

since the sense of words can come only with the ideas, and since those ideas come to us only by degrees, taking their source from sensible objects. But, further, we wish them to acquire those ideas without the aids that we ourselves have had—we whom age and experience have formed. We fetter their imaginations, we withhold from them the sight of objects by means of which nature gives to the savage the first notions of all things, of all the sciences even, of astronomy, of geometry, of the elements of natural history. A man, after a very long education, knows not the course of the seasons, how to find his way, or discover his position by the cardinal points; he knows not the commonest plants or animals. We have not an eye for nature. It is the same in morals; general ideas here, too, spoil everything. We are very careful to tell a child that it must be just, temperate, virtuous. Has it the least idea of what virtue is? Do not say to your son—'be virtuous,' but make him feel pleasure in being so; develop in his heart the germ of the sentiments which nature has implanted. We need oftener to erect barriers against education than against nature. Give him occasions to be truthful, generous, compassionate; rely on the human heart; leave those precious seeds of virtue to expand in the air which surrounds them; do not stifle them under a mass of matting and wooden frames. I am not of those who wish to reject abstract and general ideas; they are necessary; but I do not think they are in their place in our mode of teaching. Let them come to children as they have come to men, by degrees, and by rising from sensible notions up to them. Another feature of our education, which seems to me bad and ridiculous, is our severity towards these poor children. They commit some

folly; we reprove them as if it were of great importance. There is a multitude of such things of which they will be corrected by mere lapse of time; but we do not think of that; we wish our son to be well brought up, and we overwhelm him with little rules of civility, often frivolous, which can only hamper him, since he knows not their reasons. I think it enough to prevent him from annoying those whom he sees. The rest will come little by little. Inspire him with the desire to please, and he will soon know more of the ways how than all the masters can teach him. Again, we wish a child to be grave; we make his excellence to consist in his not running; we are for ever afraid lest he fall. What is the result? He is harrassed and enfeebled. We have above all forgotten that it is a part of education to form the body; and the reason is not far to seek; it springs from our old customs, our old institutions. Our ignorant nobles knew nought but the body; it was men of the people who studied; it was only to become priests and monks; again, it was only persons of a certain age, and whose studies, consequently, could be conducted in a graver fashion. Hence, too, the course was to learn only Latin; that was then the whole of education, because it was not men that it was sought to form, but priests—persons capable of answering in the examinations required of them. Even at this day we study philosophy, not to be philosophers, but to pass Masters of Arts. What followed? When the nobles wished to study, they studied after the forms of established colleges; and the only result has often been that they have been disgusted with the study."

Much remains of interest and value; but I must here close abruptly, in the hope that, little by little, there has

grown up in the minds of even those of you, if any, to whom Turgot was heretofore not much more than a name or a shadow,—a tolerably clear and full idea of what manner of man he was in his character and life,—and that you will not think my admiration excessive, or your time ill spent. I cannot better sum up all than in the words of M. Monjean: "A synthetic spirit in an age of analysis, religious in an age of scepticism and the shaking of all creeds: upright and simple amidst the sophisms of interests, of the violence of sects and the noise of social declamations; studious of the past which he understood with admirable judgment, amidst the contempt of all traditions, and the intolerant dicta of the haughty worshippers of pure reason and absolute right; of conduct strictly pure, in the general laxity of morals, he never had other guide than his conscience, other aim than the truth, other practice than goodness. No language can give an adequate notion of what Turgot was. It is in the collection of his works that we must contemplate at once the man, the writer, and the administrator. From the words which he addressed to his contemporaries, men of this day may draw the most salutary lessons. If he seems to have thus written for the future, it is because he had seized the truth, which is of all times. Turgot is one of those thinkers whose works are as lasting as the human race,—one of those citizens whose name is inseparably united with that of their country. A man complete and admirable in the diverse manifestations of his faculties moral and intellectual,—he belongs to science by his genius, to France by his patriotism, to all ages by his virtue."

APPENDIX.

Page 1.

"In reading the history of that noble efflorescence of charity which marked the first ages of Christianity, it is impossible to avoid reflecting upon the strange destiny that has consigned almost all its authors to obscurity, while the names of those who took any conspicuous part in sectarian history have become household words among mankind."—Lecky. History of Rationalism. 1865. Vol. ii., p. 265.

While these pages are passing through the press, a gentleman long and creditably engaged in education, writes to me: "I am sorry to confess my utter ignorance of Turgot. Was he a teacher?"

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Page 12.

Of Turgot's article on *Evidence* in the Encyclopédie, Rivarol said, with his usual preference of sarcasm to truth—"It is a cloud undertaking to write on the sun."

Page 12.

"The maxim which has become the device of modern society—'*laissez faire, laissez passer*'—applied to industry and to commerce,—this maxim, so often criticised by those who have not taken the trouble to understand it, is perfectly true and just. '*Laissez faire,*' that is to say, allow every man to use honestly and to the best of his judgment the faculties which he has received from God. This is a natural right of the first rank—to live by labour. '*Laissez passer,*' that is to say, do not obstruct exchange. If God has created different climates, and productions as different as the climates, it is in order to make humanity one people, united by the community of wants and of interests. To obstruct exchange

is to obstruct labour; to obstruct labour is to obstruct life. Who can give the State this strange right to impoverish its subjects, and to make them die of hunger? . . . Let the State preserve peace and security, it has done its part; whenever it passes out of its own sphere it troubles and deranges society. There is famine only in the countries in which the States interfere to regulate the supply of food. The most wretched people are ever the most protected. Each for himself and God for all, is the principle of the modern world—a principle as true in economics, as it is false in the domain of charity."—Edouard Laboulaye, "*La Partie Liberale.*" 1864. C. iii., p. 23—24.

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"Je vous ai dit que nos députés avaient l'ordre écrit d'abolir les barrières interieures, qui gênaient le commerce; les maîtrises et jurandes, qui gênaient l'industrie; les dîmes et droits féodaux, qui gênaient l'agriculture; la vénalité des charges et offices, contraire à la justice; les tortures et autres barbaries, contraires à l'humanité; et les vœux des moines, contraires aux familles, aux bonnes mœurs et au bon sens."—Histoire d'un Paysan. Par Erckmann-Chatrian. 1869. Vol. ii., p. 2.

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It is right to say that Dugald Stewart doubts that this epistolary correspondence between Adam Smith and Turgot ever existed. He thinks it "proper to mention," moreover, "that Smith's political lectures, comprehending the fundamental principles of his 'Inquiry,' were delivered at Glasgow as early as the year 1752 or 1753; at a period, surely, when there existed no French performance on the subject, that could be of much use to him in guiding his researches." The question, however, really regards not originality, but priority, especially in publication. Adam Smith was assuredly no plagiarist, no mere adopter of others' thoughts.

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As an evidence of the growing tendency to agitate the question of land tenure, and as a sign of the direction of opinion, I append, without comment, the programme of an Association lately formed in London, under the presidency of Mr. J. S. Mill.

LAND TENURE REFORM ASSOCIATION.

THE NEW PROGRAMME—

I. To remove all legal and fiscal impediments to the transfer of land.

II. To secure the abolition of the law of primogeniture.

III. To restrict within the narrowest limits the power of tying up land.

IV. To claim for the benefit of the State, the interception by taxation of the future unearned increase of the rent of land, [so far as the same can be ascertained], or a great part of that increase, which is continually taking place, without any effort or outlay by the proprietors, merely through the growth of population and wealth; reserving to owners the option of relinquishing their property to the State at the market value which it may have acquired at the time when this principle may be adopted by the legislature.

V. To promote a policy of encouragement to co-operative agriculture, through the purchase by the State, from time to time, of estates which are in the market, and the letting of them, under proper regulations, to such co-operative associations, as afford sufficient evidence of spontaneity and promise of efficiency.

VI. To promote the acquisition of land in a similar manner, to be let to small cultivators, on conditions, which, while providing for the proper cultivation of the land, shall secure to the cultivator a durable interest in it.

VII. Lands belonging to the crown, or to public bodies, or charitable and other endowments, to be made available for the same purposes, as well as for the improvement of the dwellings of the working classes; and no such lands to be suffered (unless in pursuance of the above-mentioned ends, or for peculiar and exceptional reasons) to pass into private hands.

VIII. All lands now waste, or requiring an Act of Parliament to authorise their inclosure, to be retained for national uses; compensation being made for manorial rights and rights of common.

IX. That, while it is expedient to bring a large portion of the present waste lands under cultivation for the purposes and on the principles laid down in the preceding articles, it is desirable that the less fertile portions, especially those which are within reach of populous districts, should be retained in a state of wild natural

beauty, for the general enjoyment of the community, and encouragement in all classes of healthful rural tastes, and of the higher order of pleasures; also, in order to leave to future generations the decision of their ultimate uses.

X. To obtain for the State the power to take possession (with a view to their preservation) of all natural objects or artificial constructions attached to the soil which are of historical, scientific, or artistic interest, together with so much of the surrounding land as may be thought necessary, the owners being compensated for the value of the land so taken.

JOHN STUART MILL, Chairman.
PETER ALFRED TAYLOR, Treasurer.
ANDREW REID, Secretary.

Land Tenure Reform Association,
9, *Buckingham-street, Strand, London, W.C.,*
July 8th, 1870.

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That this was Adam Smith's intention is proved by the unimpeachable testimony of Dugald Stewart. In his "Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith," he says: "Mr. Smith was also well known to M. Quesnai, the profound and original author of the 'Economical Table,' a man (according to Mr. Smith's account of him) of the greatest modesty and simplicity; and whose system of political economy he has pronounced, with all its imperfections, 'to be the nearest approximation to the truth that has yet been published on the principles of that very important science.' If he had not been prevented by Quesnai's death, Mr. Smith had once an intention *(as he told me himself)* to have inscribed to him his 'Wealth of Nations.'"

Adam Smith, however, says: "The most distinct and best connected account of this (Quesnai's) doctrine is to be found in a little book written by M. Mercier de la Rivière, some time intendant of Martinico, entitled, 'The Natural and Essential Order of Political Societies.'" B. iv., c. 9. Mr. M'Culloch also, in his "Introductory Discourse," quotes M. Mercier de la Rivière as "the ablest expositor of this system." P. lxiii.

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This question as to the final incidence of taxation was humorously treated by Mr. C. Read, M.P., at an Oxford meeting, on 20th July, 1870. He said: "What did the Government propose to do for them in the circumstances in which they were placed? They proposed to set landlord and tenant by the ears; to divide the rate between the owners and the occupiers. In fact, by putting the lots into two baskets on the back of one donkey, they wanted to make them believe that the same beast did not carry the whole burden."—*Times*, 21*st July*, 1870. It is not quite self-evident, however, *which* is the donkey.

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"Louis the XVI.'s minister, Turgot, was the first to perceive this" (that seditious songs were scattered about by the thousand, and did more than any amount of newspaper writing could have done). "He argued very soundly that it was much better to allow people to relieve their minds in gazettes published openly, and by responsible editors, than to let them have recourse to pamphlets, the authors of which it was impossible to detect. All he could obtain, however, was that a body of seventy-two censors should be established, and that these men, for the most part ignorant supernumerary clerks, should receive instructions to be indulgent. Not long afterwards the Revolution broke out, sweeping away both king and censors, and flooding the country with such papers as *L'Ami du Peuple*, *Le Père Duchêne*, *Le Vieux Cordelier*, and others equally absurd and bloodthirsty."—*Pall Mall Gazette*, 15th October, 1869. "Continental Journalism."

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"Nothing tends more to impede the progress of liberty, nothing is more fatal to independence of spirit in the public, than to add to the powers of the priesthood in matters of education. If you give them such increased powers by legislative enactment, you do more than you could effect by any other means to enslave and degrade a people subject to their influence."—JOHN BRIGHT.

It is, however, one thing to deny to the clergy an exclusive or a dominant sway in matters of education, and quite another to refuse to them all share whatever in the work.

Page 30.

"So, when Zwingle died, exclaiming, 'The body they can kill, the soul they cannot kill,'—over his corpse animosity relented sufficiently to acknowledge,—'If you were a heretic, Zwingle, you were an honest man.'"

Page 41.

"Eadem ratio fecit hominem hominum appetentem, cumque his naturâ et sermone, et usu congruentem, ut profectus a caritate domesticorum, ac suorum, serpat longius, et se implicet primum civium, deinde omnium mortalium societate: atque, ut ad Architam scripsit Plato, non sibi se soli natum meminerit, sed patriæ, sed suis, ut perexigua pars ipsi relinquatur." Cicero. De Finibus—II. 14.

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"En général, avant qu'une terre puisse être cultivée, il faut qu'elle soit défrichée, qu'elle soit preparée par une multitude de travaux et de dépenses diverses. . . . . : or, *comme ces richesses mobilierès, incorporées pour ainsi dire dans les terres, ne peuvent plus en être separées*, il est sensible qu' on ne peut se porter à faire ces dépenses que sous la condition de rester proprietaire de ces terres:" . . . .

Mercier de la Rivière, quoted by Ch. Dupont White: "Relations du Travail avec le Capital:" 1846, p. 312.

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